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O'Beirne, The Editors

A Global Recession? — Milton Friedman

NATIONAL REVIEW

THE UNMAKING OF A PRESIDENT

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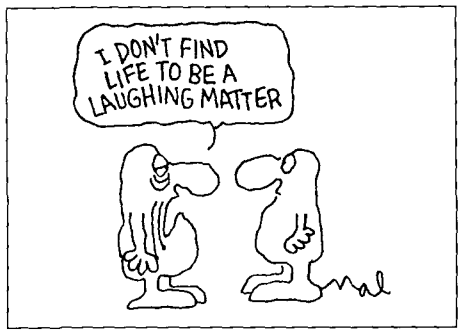
SEPTEMBER 28, 1998 VOL. L, NO. 18



COVER STORY

39 ***U.S. v. Clinton***
Last April, one of our Editors-at-Large gave a speech at Kent State in which he surveyed the Clinton scene. That was just before the decision in the Paula Jones case. **Wm. F. Buckley Jr.** spoke of that case and attendant questions involving President Clinton which, three weeks ago, ripened in the historical August 17 deposition and public statement.

We asked **David Gelernter**, **Peter Robinson**, **James J. Kilpatrick**, **George McGovern**, and **Lance Morrow** to reason forward with their own analyses or vaticinations on points raised in that speech. We offer the package as singularly instructive—and readable.

ARTICLES

20 ***Bread & Circuses***
The Starr report needs careful handling. **Kate O'Beirne** explains which end is up.

22 ***Russian Rubble***
At its root, says **David Satter**, the Russian crisis isn't a matter of economics at all.

24 ***Global Risk***
Failed Clinton policies created the global economic mess. It's time, argues **Lawrence B. Lindsey**, for America to lead again.

26 ***Glum and Glummer***
The news is good. So why all the frowns from social conservatives? asks **Richard Nadler**.

30 ***Fong Show***
California Senate candidate Matt Fong, reports **John J. Miller**, may deliver a new constituency to the GOP.

33 ***Neglected Solutions***
Richard B. McKenzie takes a second look at orphanages—and likes what he sees.

36 ***MADD House***
Eric Peters asks: Has Mothers Against Drunk Driving swerved out of control?

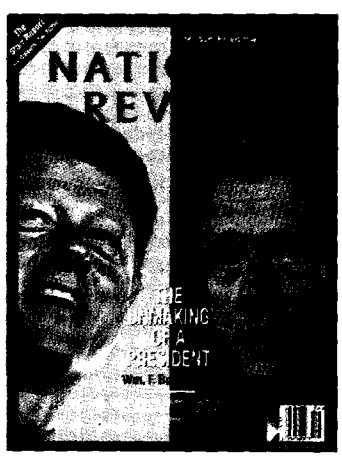
38 ***Silence Treatment***
Speaking out against racial preferences can get you fired, reports **William Mellor**.

BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

52 ***Fall Books Issue***
In *The Clinton Syndrome*, psychologist Jerome D. Levin diagnoses Monica's boyfriend. **Florence King** gives a second opinion. . . . **Roger Kimball** applauds *From Plato to NATO* by David Gress and agrees that one does not have to pretend Western Civilization is perfect to know it's worth preserving. . . . **Jacob Neusner** declares *Kaddish*, Leon Wieseltier's meditation on the death of his father, a masterpiece. . . . Philip Roth knows how to write great novels, says **John Derbyshire**. The predictable *I Married a Communist* proves he also knows how to be sanctimonious. . . . *The Story of American Freedom*, by Eric Foner, is brilliant at times, writes **Robert H. Ferrell**, but in the end it doesn't capture the complexities of American history. . . . **Richard Brookhiser** communes with the (not-so) ancient at New York's last stop for dying books. . . . The Pierre Bonnard exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, writes **James Gardner**, illustrates the tension between quantity and quality. . . . **John Simon** would go back to see Anne Heche's performance in *Return to Paradise*. And *Regeneration* is one of the best films not playing in your local theater.

SECTIONS

2 ***Letters***
4 ***From the Editor***
6 ***For the Record***
9 ***The Week***
49 ***Letter from Al***
50 hel
66 ***On the Right***
68 ***The Misanthrope's Corner***



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LETTERS

Seeing Green

Jonathan Adler's cover story on the "global warming" crisis ["Hot Air," Aug. 17] exemplifies one pitfall in debating complex legal documents like the Kyoto Protocol. Those who have staked out a public position, like Mr. Adler, are tempted to misrepresent the nature of the document.

Mr. Adler tells us, accurately, that the protocol could be amended by a three-fourths majority of the parties. "Thus," Mr. Adler continues, "U.S. obligations under the treaty could escalate without the Senate's, or even the President's, consent." This is false. Article 19, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the protocol—like Article 15 of the underlying Framework Convention on Climate Change—make it crystal clear that amendments are not binding on parties that do not accept them affirmatively. Likewise for Annexes A and B to the protocol, as made clear by Article 20, paragraph 7.

Robert J. McManus
Lerner, Reed, Bolton & McManus, LLP
Washington, D.C.

I must address Mr. Adler's article "Hot Air," in which he compares Frederick Seitz's Global Warming Petition Project to Ozone Action's Scientists' Statement on Global Climatic Disruption. In order to sign Ozone Action's Statement, scientists had to fill out detailed forms giving their qualifications, which were checked for accuracy. Only scientists working on master's degrees or higher were listed among the thousands of signatories.

By contrast, signatories of the Global Warming Petition Project only had to visit the petition website and fill out a short form. Names are listed on the site without title, affiliation, or any other means of checking whether they were scientists or even real people.

Brandon MacGillis
Director of Campaigns, Ozone Action
Washington, D.C.

The Latin Vote

Like so many Republican observers over the past few years, Scott McConnell misunderstands the emerging Latino electorate ["Barrio Blues," Aug. 17] and the reasons why Latinos are voting less and less for the GOP. As much as conservatives don't like to admit it, culture matters in American politics. In our attempts to create a "color-blind" society we have become "culture-blind" as well.

All the more unfortunate, because Latinos are a dynamic, self-sufficient, family-oriented, and entrepreneurial people. Their culture and values system promise to be the future of the conservative movement and reinvigorate an increasingly decadent "American" culture. The challenge we face is empowering the appropriate messengers, not changing our message, as Mr. McConnell suggests.

Mike Madrid
Political Director
California Republican Party
Burbank, Calif.

The Top Bulldog

As an alumnus and follower of the conservative scene at Yale, I am glad to see *NR* returning to this subject from time to time. Regrettably, however, the September 14 article "A Conservative Party" was misleading, insofar as it attempted to describe conservative intellectual life at Yale without reference to the Party of the Right—the nearly fifty-year-old organization whose members include[d] Frank Meyer, Richard Brookhiser, Walter Olson, Richard Vigilante, Maggie Gallagher, and Mark Cunningham. The author, Avik Roy, who founded the Conservative Party a little over two years ago (it is *not* the same party to which Robert Taft and Wm. F. Buckley Jr. once belonged), is entitled to extol his own group, but editors and readers—especially conservative Yale freshmen—should be aware that leaving the POR out of a sketch of conservative life at Yale is like leaving Yale out of an essay on Connecticut colleges, or *NR* out of an article on conservative magazines.

David M. Wagner, Yale '80
Assistant Professor
Regent University School of Law
Virginia Beach, Va.

Order in the Court

In "Courting Disaster" [Aug. 17], Robert George and Ramesh Ponnuru repeat the conservative mantra that the Supreme Court usurps legislative power and substitutes its will for the will of the people. According to the authors, the root of judicial imperialism is "the courts' claim always to have the last, authoritative word on constitutional interpretation." They cite the passage in Lincoln's inaugural address rejecting the opinion of the Court in *Dred Scott*, as the final word on the constitutional powers of Congress over slavery in the territories. But Lincoln was not denying the Court's standing to rule in this matter; rather, he was rejecting the Deep South's attempt to use the Court's opinion as the basis of its demand for a federal slave code for the territories.

The root of the difference between Lincoln and his opponents had nothing to do with the proper role of the courts in constitutional jurisprudence; it had to do with the proper role of the principles of the Declaration of Independence in constitutional jurisprudence. It was the application of those principles to the equal-protection clause of the Fifth Amendment that led Lincoln and the Republicans in 1860 to demand a congressional exclusion of slavery from the territories.

Harry V. Jaffa
Distinguished Fellow
The Claremont Institute
Washington, D.C.

Saving Mr. Simon

Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* has generally met with good to excellent reviews, John Simon's August 17 review being an exception. Mr. Simon supposes "it may just be that, of all armies, the American would be sentimental enough for such a quixotic enterprise." Substitute "concerned" for "sentimental," and, yes, my service with the 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, landing on Normandy's Utah Beach the first week of August 1944, leads me to guess that it would.

We had a case where a lieutenant, having led a platoon of tank destroyers from Utah Beach through the Battle of the Bulge and across the Rhine, received word that his father was dying of a brain tumor. Knowing that the lieutenant's brother had just arrived in Europe with the 42nd Rainbow Infantry Division, the Army had the wisdom and the heart to send the tank-destroyer veteran home.

Calvin C. Boykin Jr.
President, WWII Tank Destroyer Society
College Station, Tex.

Mac Attack

David Klinghoffer, in his interesting Macintosh *v.* Microsoft article ["Golden Apples," Aug. 17], describes Windows advocates as "nerds" with a history of being "indifferent to girls" and Mac aficionados as "mama's boys." Mr. Klinghoffer must be a Windows fan. He's so indifferent to girls, he has forgotten that women even exist.

Amy Moritz Ridenour
President, The National Center
for Public Policy Research
Washington, D.C.

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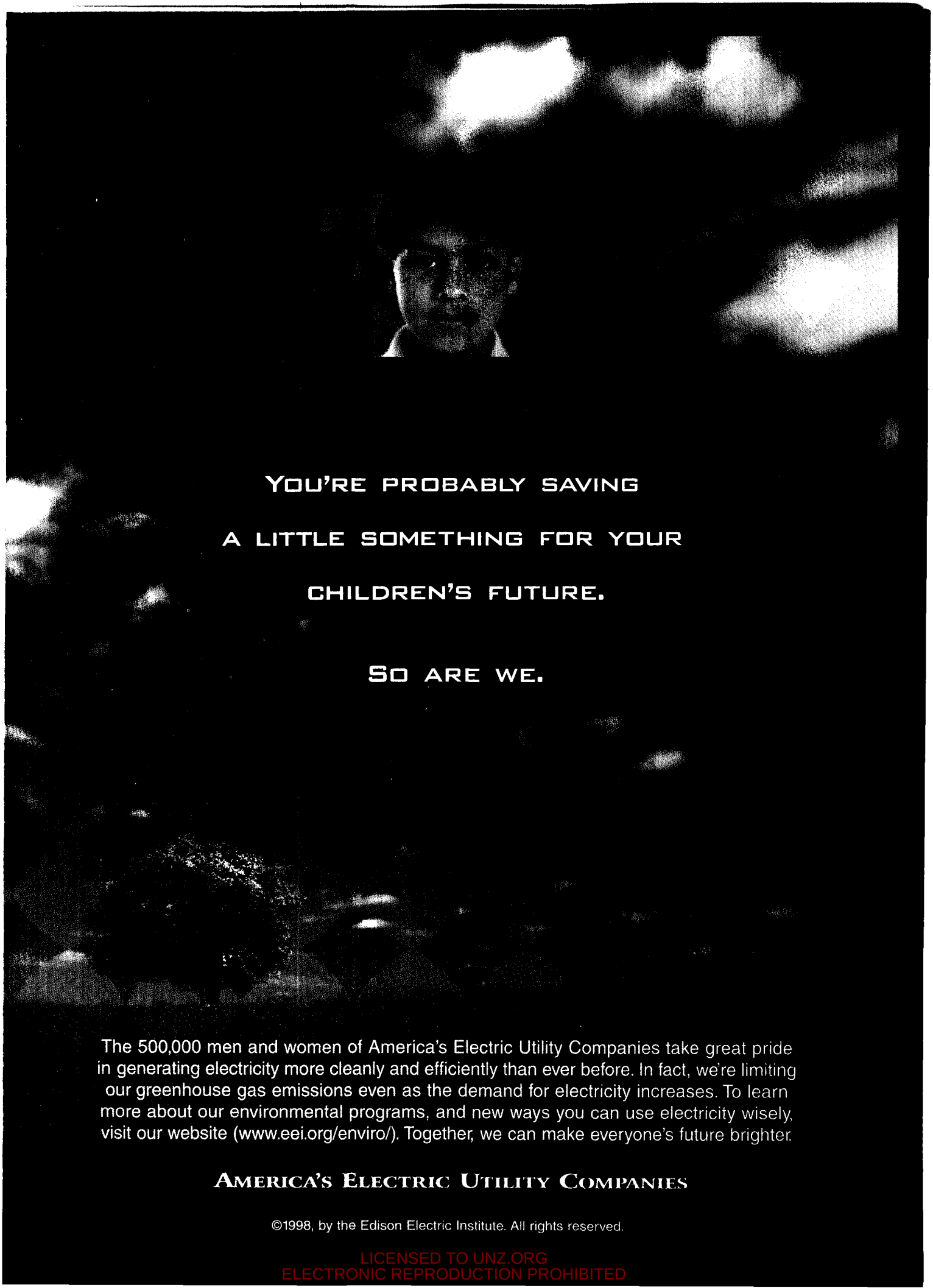

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FROM THE EDITOR

Inglis Only

REP. Bob Inglis is delighted. The South Carolina Republican is sitting at a desk, squeezed between a bed and one wall of his fire-engine red campaign RV, explaining how his huge rolling campaign headquarters will help him beat 32-year incumbent Sen. Fritz Hollings. He is positively aglow, not just with the prospect of victory, but with the sheer pleasure a baby-boomer lawyer takes in a new gadget.

His RV clearly beats the latest satellite dish or wafer-thin cell phone. The exterior is plastered from top to bottom with his name and his smiling, waving visage. A sound system can pump out rousing campaign music. Inside, there are phone lines and a fax. Between stops, Inglis can write notes at his desk or, late at night, sleep on the bed. And no tour of the RV would be complete without a visit to the helium tank tucked underneath a seat—for inflating campaign balloons.

Hollings refers to all this as "the circus." The silver-haired 76-year-old would no sooner be caught inside such a contraption than he would endorse term limits (another Inglis enthusiasm). But that only makes his possible defeat in November all the more galling—it won't even be dignified. Hollings is nearly the last of a dying breed, a Southern courthouse Democrat who has watched the politics and culture of the region shift right out from under him.

Hollings was elected governor of South Carolina forty years ago, when the state first faced school desegregation. Then, the state founded by planters from Barbados still had a tropical, Third World feel; it was poor and dominated by one party (in 1940, FDR took 96 per cent of the state's vote). Now, it is a leader of the New South, with a good school system, a booming economy, and a GOP rising toward dominance.

Inglis hasn't festooned the side of his RV with posters saying "New South," but he might as well. Above the refurbished copper dome of the South Carolina capitol is a tiny extra dash of color—the Confederate flag. Inglis wants it removed; Hollings was governor when it was first run up the pole. Inglis represents the Greenville area, home to Michelin and BMW; Hollings's turf is Charleston, still redolent of the era of plantations.

The change Inglis represents is not all to the good. Hollings may be arrogant—he is not well liked in the Senate—but he is a reminder of a South of honor and lost causes. He graduated from the rabidly traditional Citadel and served in World War II; Inglis went to law school. And, say what you will about Hollings, he's not touchy-feely, as Inglis sometimes is (campaign slogan: "Finally, Someone's Listening!").

But Hollings is unfit for the new world. With his marbles-in-the-mouth Deep South accent, he is at times literally incomprehensible. Inglis aides chuckle over a story about how a reporter new to South Carolina supposedly missed a story when Hollings joked about "African potentates" eating one another. The reporter heard Hollings make the statement—he just didn't understand him. Inglis himself enjoys doing an impression of the Senator issuing obscure Southernisms.

Hollings will try to hang on with an expensive campaign charging Inglis with being an "extremist." But it won't stick; Inglis, slender with thick glasses, is about as threatening as Michael Kinsley. His courageous and principled vote against the profligate highway bill will be a bigger problem. But Inglis might get away with it, since it fits under his appealing rubric of "newness": in this case, "an old style of representation" *v.* "a new style."

"If you want somebody who is on a looting mission for our state in Washington, I really would rather not accept the job," he says. "If that's the job description we've got a pretty good Senator—his name is Fritz Hollings." Ouch. Inglis loves using the old *v.* new formulation because he knows he's swimming with the tide of 1990s South Carolina. Get on the RV—it's leaving the station. —RICHARD LOWRY

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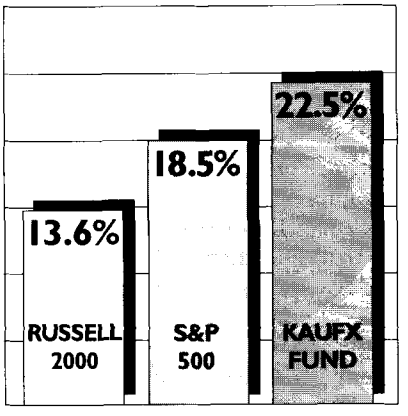

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FOR THE RECORD

■ President **Clinton**, in Moscow, on the Russian economy: "Given the facts before you, I have to tell you that I do not believe there are any painless solutions. And indeed, an attempt to avoid difficult solutions may only prolong and worsen the present challenges." . . . Pew Research Center poll: 42 per cent of Americans say "Liar" is first word that comes to mind when Clinton is mentioned. Second most popular choice: "Dishonest," named by 18 per cent. . . . According to *Reuters*, unnamed White House official says of notably cool First Couple: "Looking at them makes you think twice about cheating." . . . Outside Virginia elementary school where Clinton delivers education speech, woman holds sign: "I wish I could teach my child to respect you." . . . Rentals skyrocket (to top five) for movie *Wag the Dog*. . . . Russian street vendors sell *matrioshka* nesting dolls featuring image of Clinton with **Monica Lewinsky**, **Gennifer Flowers**, and other presidential paramours inside. . . . **Al Gore**, asked by *New York Times* whether Clinton personally lied to him: "I've never talked about my private conversations with the President, and I'm not going to start now."

■ Democrat **Garry Mauro**, running for governor of Texas, on Clinton, to *San Antonio Express-News*: "I support my friends when they're up and when they're down." In Texas Poll, Mauro is down 47 points versus Gov. **George W. Bush** (R.). . . . Sen. **Fred Thompson** (R., Tenn.) hires new chief of staff, **Powell Moore**, who has worked on every GOP presidential campaign since 1972. . . . Federal Election Commission sues **Steve Forbes** for $94,900, contending his column in *Forbes* magazine constituted an illegal campaign contribution during the 1996 presidential race. Forbes says FEC is trying to "control basic political expression." . . . Republicans compile short list for host city of 2000 national convention: Indianapolis, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Antonio. Democrats: Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Miami, New Orleans, Minneapolis.

■ Relations between White House and Congress are "the worst I've ever seen," says Sen. **Phil Gramm** (R., Tex.) in *The Hill*. . . . Senate Majority Leader **Trent Lott** promises no Senate vote on Puerto Rican statehood this year, but **Jim Boulet Jr.** of English First warns that it could still slip through without debate at end of session. . . . Clinton Administration ponders suing tobacco companies for Medicare costs of treating sick smokers. . . . **Strom Thurmond** (R., S.C.), at 95, became second senator ever to cast 15,000 votes, on September 2. . . . Sen. **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** (D., N.Y.), on Religious Right, in *Playboy*: "I will say this to you and if you can print it, do. Once a year the anti-abortion people come to Washington. . . . [T]hey are the one group that comes to see me that doesn't want anything other than to discuss a moral issue it's concerned with. I might meet three or four other people a year like that, but not many. They're the only working people I ever see. They come down by bus. They don't go out to lunch at the mall. They just want to say they have a view of something. I've always voted against them."

■ Louisiana Gov. **Mike Foster** (R.) endorses drug testing for high-school and college students. . . . N.Y. Gov. **George Pataki** (R.) raises state unemployment benefits. . . . In Long Beach, Calif., Municipal Court Judge **Joan Comparet-Cassani** faces federal probe for shocking unruly handcuffed prisoner with stun belt. . . . Justice Department joins a Virginia school district in defending race-based admissions at alternative schools, twice ruled unconstitutional by federal judge. . . . As many as 136,000 violent crimes and 299,000 other crimes go unsolved each year, says National Center for Policy Analysis, because of *Miranda* rules imposed on police by Supreme Court. . . . Nielsen Media Research reports homes with Internet access watch 15 per cent less television. . . . Intercollegiate Studies Institute and Eerdmans Publishing release sensible guidebook, *Choosing the Right College: The Whole Truth about America's 100 Top Schools*.

"Can you direct me to the White House?"

■ Moscow newspaper dubs Clinton–**Yeltsin** meeting "summit of losers." . . . Austrian newspaper *Kronenzeitung* drops **Hillary Clinton**'s syndicated column because it avoids Lewinsky scandal. . . . Libya's **Muammar Qaddafi** offers to send lawyer for Clinton's legal defense, adds: "Clinton is not **Reagan**, who was ridiculous, an idiot, aggressive and behaved like a cowboy." . . . **Dmitri Ayatskov**, governor of Russia's Saratov region, impressed by American President's ability to listen: "I envy Monica Lewinsky—he is a great guy." . . . Polish ex-President **Lech Walesa** boycotts celebration of Solidarity's 18th anniversary because current leadership supports privatization of bankrupt Gdansk shipyard where organization was born. . . . French bureaucrats raid large corporations to enforce legal limit of 39-hour work week, scheduled to drop to 35 hours in 2000. Defense firm Thomson–CSF faces fines of up to $80,000 for each of 1,500 violations. . . . Price of water in heat-scorched port of Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, soars from 25 cents per ton to $160 per ton. . . . United Nations report estimates world population will reach 6 billion on June 16, 1999.

■ Entrepreneurs in Sumner, Wash., launch The Original Conservative Coffee Company, selling coffee by phone (1-888-RIGHT81) and by Internet (www.toccc.com). Try rich and creamy "An American Hero Blend," in honor of President Reagan, or "Gore's Blend," a decaffeinated coffee that "will allow you to sleep, and at the same time give you dreams of tall standing redwood trees, all bark and no bite."

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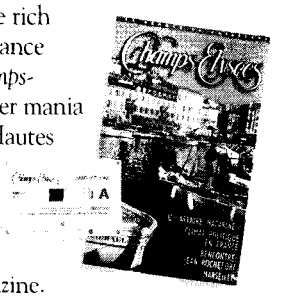
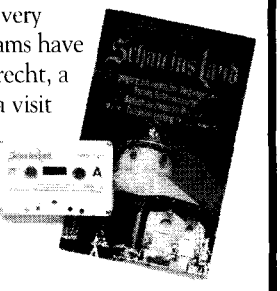
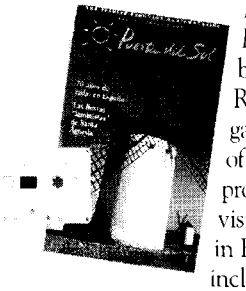
Champs-Elysées in French: The rich traditions and contemporary *élan* of France resonate through each edition of *Champs-Elysées*. A comprehensive look at soccer mania in France, a promenade through the Hautes Vosges, a behind-the-scenes visit to the Eiffel Tower, and a report on the scandal brewing in Paris's city hall are among the recent features on this lively French-language audiomagazine.



Schau ins Land in German: Professional journalists in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland provide a fascinating overview of German-speaking Europe every month in *Schau ins Land*. Recent programs have included a two-part profile of Bertolt Brecht, a feature on women in the Bundeswehr, a visit to Dresden's Frauenkirche, a look at Sion, Switzerland's campaign to host the 2006 Olympics, and a report on the 50th anniversary of the world-renowned Max Planck Institute.



Puerta del Sol in Spanish: A talented group of broadcast journalists in Madrid examines the colorful textures of Hispanic culture every two months in *Puerta del Sol*. An interview with best-selling novelist Arturo Perez-Reverte, features on the walled gardens of Córdoba and the restoration of one of El Greco's masterpieces, a profile of Federico García Lorca, and a visit to the new Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao are just a sample of segments included in recent editions of this compelling Spanish-language audiomagazine.



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THE WEEK

■ Can Sammy Sosa catch Roger Maris before Bill Clinton catches Richard Nixon?

■ In the first known instance of humanity and humor on the part of the Internal Revenue Service, Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti said, "Sometimes pieces of the tax code can be as hard to understand as the infield-fly rule," and exempted home-run balls returned to the slugger from the federal gift tax, just hours before Mark McGwire swatted #62.

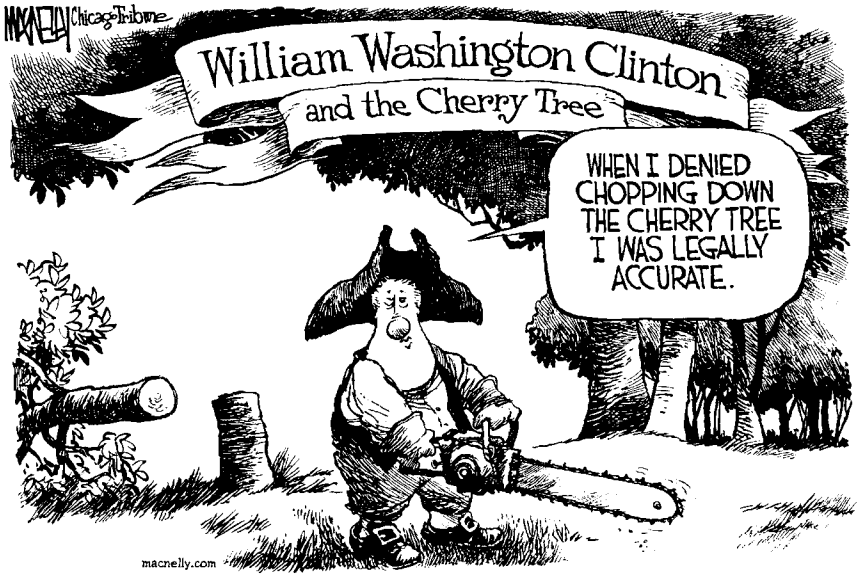
■ Look who's got the triangulation blues. For years Bill Clinton sold himself as a third way between the stale orthodoxies of his own party's Left and the ravings of the GOP Right. Welfare reform, free trade, and rhetoric about personal responsibility headed his agenda. Perhaps because they took item #3 seriously, centrist Democrats such as Sens. Lieberman, Moynihan, and Kerrey and Rep. James Moran (co-chairman of the New Democrat Coalition) are giving Clinton the cold shoulder; only hard-core liberals—Ted Kennedy, Jesse Jackson, Reps. John Lewis and Barney Frank—have rallied round. They have some practice at championing lost causes.

■ The Clinton White House has unveiled its latest strategy: libel. Rep. Paul McHale was the first Democrat of any prominence to call for the President's resignation—and lo, there was Geraldo Rivera, charging the former Marine with lying about his military decorations. Scott Ritter, the American who quit the UN's arms-inspection team in Iraq to protest American pressure to back off, has been accused of leaking information to Israel. Rep. Dan Burton, chairman of a House investigative committee, revealed an affair and an illegitimate child to pre-empt their possible disclosure in *Vanity Fair*. Rivera, retracting his falsehood, said he had got it from a "source very close" to the President. There are no identified sources for the Ritter and Burton stories yet, but take a guess. These folks collected nine hundred FBI files, called Paula Jones "trailer-park trash," and accused George Bush of being a coward in World War II. This isn't just their "latest strategy," it's their m.o.

■ Does the stock-market turmoil show that letting individuals invest their own Social Security funds would be too risky? Not at all. The *average* annual real return on stocks has been 7 per cent since 1926—i.e., over a period that includes the Great Depression, not just a measly market correction. There is no twenty-year period in American history in which stocks have fallen. Investors have many ways of managing risks (e.g., portfolio diversification). And these risks must be set against the certainty that young workers will get less from Social Security than they are putting into it. If anything, the public's calm reaction to the recent losses is a tribute to its growing financial sophistication—and thus an argument *for* reform. Sorry, guys: better luck next crash.

■ The presidential primaries of 2000 may make those of 1996 look like models of rationality and deliberation. States are racing to schedule their primaries earlier and earlier. Gov. Pete Wilson is considering a bill to move California's primary from June to March 7—the same day New York, Maryland, and New England (excluding New Hampshire) will hold their primaries. Other Western governors are also pondering an early primary. At this rate, the process could effectively be over before Super Tuesday in mid March. This is bad for the country and probably, given our campaign-finance restrictions, for conservatives with smaller wallets than Steve Forbes's. We are moving toward a national primary in which money, the support of state party leaders, and attention from the press would matter even more than they do now. In which case we may as well scrap the whole thing, and just run a poll a year before the election.

■ The Cato Institute's fourth biennial Fiscal Policy Report Card on the nation's governors finds many Republicans in a sophomore slump. When they first took office, governors like George Pataki (N.Y.), Christine Todd Whitman (N.J.), and John Rowland (Conn.) cut taxes to dig their states out of the fiscal wreckage left by their liberal predecessors. But now that the economy is filling state coffers to overflowing, these governors are instead spending like Bill Clinton. State budgets have risen 6 to 8 per cent this year. There are still some fiscally conservative Republicans: South Dakota's William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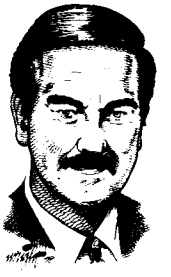
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Janklow and even Rowland got A's on Cato's report card. For the first time, indeed, Republicans are outperforming Democrats, mainly because this year's report card is also an autopsy report on the fiscally conservative Democrat. No Democrat received an A, and three—John Kitzhaber (Ore.), Lawton Chiles (Fla.), and Mel Carnahan (Mo.)—received F's. The worst-ranked Republican is George Voinovich (Ohio), who received a D and is expected next year to join the Senate, where he will fit right in.

■ So far unnoticed in the national press, a major battle over gun ownership is brewing in Missouri. On April 6 of next year, the public will vote on whether to allow law-abiding citizens to carry concealed handguns. This is a shift in gun politics: 43 states have concealed-carry laws, but they resulted from legislative action rather than popular referenda. The national gun-control lobby will naturally pour in resources in opposition to the measure, but there are several reasons for optimism. FBI statistics show that crimes against persons and property are declining more rapidly in right-to-carry states than elsewhere. Missouri has a gun-ownership rate far above the national average. And the national rate has itself been rising, perhaps in response to the sporadic gun-control policies of the Bush and Clinton Administrations. From 1988 to 1996, the proportion of Americans possessing firearms jumped 35 per cent. "The gun manufacturers should build a monument to Bill Clinton," says Kevin Jamison, press officer for the Western Missouri Shooters Alliance. "No one since King George III has led so many Americans to exercise their Second Amendment rights."

■ Al Gore has discovered a new environmental scare: vanishing farmland. He warns that America "is losing fifty acres of farmland to development each hour." Governors Voinovich, Whitman, and Parris Glendening (D., Md.) also cite the loss of farmland in their efforts to place new controls on suburban sprawl. But a study from the Competitive Enterprise Institute points out, using the Federal Government's own figures, that the amount of farmland in America has remained relatively constant, at over 450 million acres, since 1945. Meanwhile, agricultural productivity has soared, so that less land is needed to produce the same amount of food. Imposing new land-use controls would hurt farmers, by making it harder for them to sell their land or use it as collateral to finance new investment. The campaign to "save" farmland is just a new pretext for government control of private land.

■ A report by Public Agenda reveals an enormous gap between professors of education and the public. In interviews with nine hundred education professors, it found that only 19 per cent placed the same importance as the public on correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, and only 12 per cent thought it important for students to be neat, on time, and polite. A huge 88 per cent agreed that "when K–12 teachers assign students math or history questions, it is more important for the kids to struggle with the process of seeking the right answers [than] to end up knowing the right answers." Some have suggested that teachers without education degrees should be able to get licenses. The real question is whether teachers *with* education degrees should be allowed to get them.

■ The Clinton–Yeltsin summit was a meeting of cripples. But while Bill Clinton is a comic figure, Boris Yeltsin is a tragic one. His attendance at the reinterment of the Romanov bones a few weeks before the summit, and at the reopening of a Moscow synagogue during it, served as reminders that it was his moral clarity and political courage that drove the stake into the heart of Soviet Communism in 1991. But Yeltsin is hopelessly inadequate to the task of delivering Russia to its ultimate destination of freedom and prosperity. Whether drunk or just decrepit, he was barely functioning at the summit. Meanwhile, the Communist-led Duma seeks to extort a return to economic dictatorship as the price of confirming Viktor Chernomyrdin to another stint as prime minister. Russia may muddle through somehow, with an economy now the size of Spain's plus 23,000 nuclear weapons. But it is the sick man of Europe, as weakened and unpredictable as its failing president.

■ Young America's Foundation has issued its annual survey of college courses. At Dartmouth, sensitive men can take "The Masculine Mystique" ("Why are so many boys and men fascinated by sports and war?"). The University of Texas offers "Black English," the University of Wisconsin at Madison "Daytime Series: Families and Social Roles," and Amherst College "Taking Marx Seriously." Consider it the guide to "The Wrong Colleges."

■ Chicago physicist Richard Seed, the Jack Kevorkian of human cloning, last week promised he would "discover immortality" in the next two and a half years by duplicating himself. He says he will take the nucleus from one of his cells and mix it with a donor egg, which will be implanted in his "post-menopausal" wife, Gloria, who will then give birth to her . . . husband? Should Congress

Thumping the Tub

God knows it's early, but one must
Commence the thumping, though, nonplussed,
Last-dippers over Labor Day
Peered at the boardwalk in dismay.
So, moving right along, you thump
For Lungren while I, with a bump
Along with an accomplished grind,
Goose flagging Ashcroft from behind.

—W. H. von Dreele

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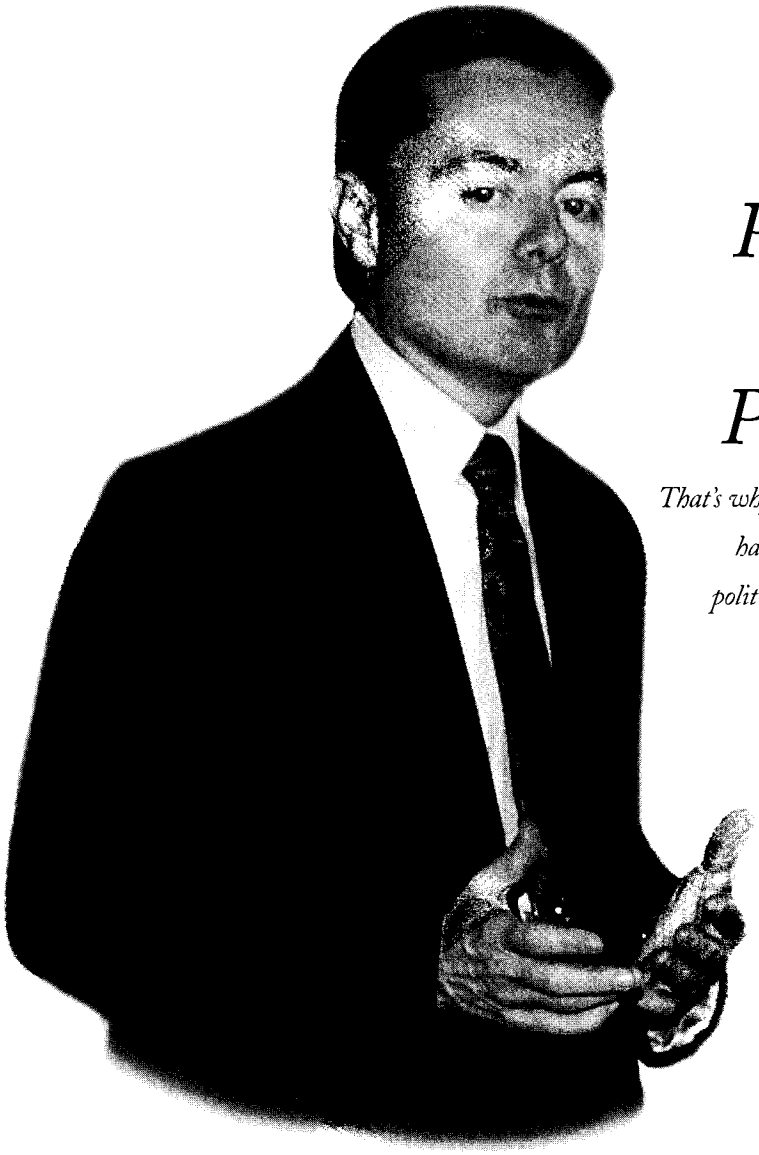

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ban cloning, Seed defiantly vows to replant his project in Tijuana, Mexico. How appropriate.

■ Akira Kurosawa was a giant of Japanese, and world, movie-making. He learned from his great American peers, and they from him. His theme was the man alone, facing harrowing or impossible odds: sometimes a villain (as in *Throne of Blood*, his version of *Macbeth*); more often a hero, from tough warriors (*The Seven Samurai*), to a meager bureaucrat determined to do one good deed before cancer kills him (*Ikiru*). Hong Kong movies, now all the rage, imitate his ballets of action, but they are tawdry, post-modern farce, next to the master. R I P.

Deep Impact

WASHINGTON has been awaiting the Starr report as if it were an asteroid from a disaster movie. As it arrives, several attendant questions and mystifications must be disposed of.

The request by presidential lawyer David Kendall that he get a week to review the report before it was submitted to the House of Representatives was legal lint. The White House will have ample time to defend itself in the court of public opinion, and in the Senate if it comes to that. (It has already had eight months, thanks largely to its own frivolous delays.) Kendall's justification for one more pause—"fundamental fairness"—recalled the parricide who throws himself on the mercy of the court because he is an orphan.

As the summer ended, the Beltway—taking its lead from the remarks on the Senate floor by Sen. Joseph Lieberman—was flirting with the notion of censure. The President deserved some punishment, the thinking went, but something short of removal from office: perhaps a formal expression of disapproval would do. But this was wheel-spinning born of timidity. While the Senate and the House have each censured their own members, there is no constitutional provision for censuring the Executive. If such a move could have any teeth, it would become a tool of legislative harassment. But in fact it has none. (What penalties attend censure? Making the President give the State of the Union address in the hallway?) Any motion of censure would join the legislative flotsam—Sense of the House or Senate resolutions, declarations of National Secretaries Week—that Congress regularly churns out and everyone ignores. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan recognized as much when he declared that Congress has "constitutional responsibilities" to face: it must consider whether to impeach and, if so, whether to convict. Anything less trivializes both Congress and the Executive, as well as the law.

Polls show that the people are as yet unwilling to take the step of impeachment. This is no surprise. The only thing the public knows beyond a shadow of a doubt is that the President is, by his own implicit admission, a liar. The dimensions of his deceit and the details of his activities are still to be presented and digested. Since Congress will get the first look at the full story, its members must take the lead—handling the matter like adults, and explaining it to their constituents. Unless events move with lightning speed (which is unlikely—see "Bread & Circuses," p. 20), the people will have an opportunity to pass on Congress's comportment in November. Any pol who wants to campaign as a champion of Oval Office orgies is invited to do so.

The public's uneasiness raises the most important point. Considering impeachment is not revolutionary. It is provided for by the system, and occurs within it. Removing a bad man from the White House is not a bad thing, but a good thing. It is not a moment of national trauma or tragedy, like a war or an assassination, but a necessary and refreshing deed. It will not solve all our problems for us, or even make us better people. But it will solve this particular problem, and it will prevent us from becoming the worse people we would be if we let the problem slide. It is a happy nation that can remove corrupt leaders without riots or putsches, and a happy people that can face the task when it must.

A World Unhinged

IT is now obvious that the Clinton Administration has lost its grip over events abroad. American leadership is feeble and has lost all respect. The world of hope that Mr. Clinton inherited in 1993—with benign relations among all the major powers, and rogue states such as Iraq safely boxed in—has given way to a world of precarious stability and growing dangers.

Terrorism is only the latest problem. Before that, the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests dramatized American irrelevance, even on a subject—nonproliferation—that President Clinton had made a sacred cause. The same is true of North Korea's and Iran's recent tests of advanced ballistic missiles. And the discovery of a vast underground nuclear-weapons facility in North Korea mocks the 1994 diplomacy that supposedly halted Pyongyang's nuclear threat. (Apparently North Korea's answers were "legally accurate" too.)

Meanwhile, UN inspectors are convinced that Saddam Hussein has: the components (though not yet the fissile material) for 3 nuclear warheads; from 5 to 12 operational (though disassembled) Scud missiles and components for 25 more; and an ongoing chemical- and biological-weapons program. Yet several times this year, Madeleine Albright has asked the inspectors to go easy, lest they provoke Saddam or discover some bad news that the Administration might have to act upon. She would rather attack Scott Ritter, the inspector who resigned and blew the whistle on her cowardice and duplicity.

Relations with the major powers are also fraying. Although China is emerging as a strategic problem, a com-

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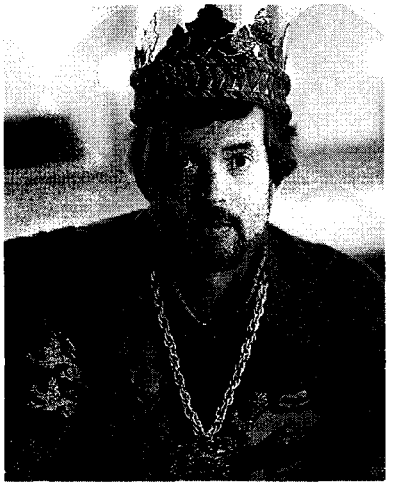

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Bubble Trouble

NOBEL laureate Milton Friedman recently talked to *NR* about the global financial crisis, the stock-market drop, and the political and economic fallout from both.

NR: Is deflation now a bigger threat than inflation?

Friedman: No. I do not think there is any real danger of deflation. We know how to stop deflation—print money. The Fed has plenty of ability to print money. Because of what's happening in the Far East and around the rest of the world, the prices of imported goods are behaving differently from the prices of domestic goods. The best indication of the price level of non-traded goods is what happens to money wages. And money wages have continued to go up, showing no sign of deflation.

NR: Do you foresee a recession anytime soon?

Friedman: A recession is very possible. We have been having them for two hundred years. The world hasn't changed. But nobody has a good record of predicting a recession in advance. There's an enormous amount of noise in an economic system. You have daily, monthly, weekly ups and downs. And almost always, just before a recession starts, most forecasters are predicting continued expansion.

NR: Have the recent troubles in the stock markets been noise?

Friedman: I have believed for some time that the stock market was in a bubble, and that bubble just burst. And it's a good thing to have bubbles burst, because you cannot sustain a bubble indefinitely. And if the bubble goes too far, the bursting has very serious consequences. The best example of that is Japan, where the bubble went too far in the late 1980s, and when it burst in 1990 Japan took action which led to, by now, eight years of seriously depressed conditions.

NR: What accounted for our bubble?

Friedman: A tendency for people to extrapolate the past too far. What accounted for the tulip bubble in the Netherlands some centuries back? What accounted for the Florida land bubble, the Japanese bubble? Bubbles occur because there's a mass psychology that develops and that tends to project what's going on and thinks it will always continue to go on.

NR: Some commentators say all this might slow the worldwide turn to free markets. Is that a threat?

Friedman: Yes, there's a real threat, not in the United States but in other countries around the world. What's happening is not attributable to free markets but in almost all cases to the absence of a free market. Russia's problems do not arise from a free-market economy. Most agricultural land in Russia is still collectively owned and not available for private purchase or sale. The large enterprises have remained essentially state-controlled monopolies.

And the problems of the Far East did not arise because free-market capitalism was given free rein. They arose because those countries followed monetary and fiscal policies that were not consistent with free markets. The three countries in the Far East—Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan—whose markets were most closely free markets, are the ones which have done better in this most recent period. Hong Kong is in the process of undoing something that it took many years to create. Hong Kong established a reputation that government would not intervene, and would allow the markets to work. And now, the Hong Kong government has started to intervene in the stock market. They are risking throwing away the accumulated reputation of years for very little benefit.

NR: Does the United States have any obligation to provide liquidity to the rest of the world?

Friedman: None whatsoever. I believe that the International Monetary Fund is a major source of the present difficulties in the Far East and in Russia as well. The IMF did not bail out South Korea; it bailed out the banks in London, New York, and Berlin that were making loans to South Korea. The effect of the IMF has been to encourage foreign investors to undertake ventures that were not economically justified because they had the expectation that if they got into trouble, the IMF would be there to bail them out.

NR: There's one school of thought that argues that currency devaluations started this whole mess. Others say that currency devaluations only speak of deeper fundamental problems.

Friedman: There are three arrangements that need to be kept separate. One arrangement is a truly fixed exchange rate, like the dollar in California and New York, the use of a single currency. A second arrangement is a pegged exchange rate in which a central bank undertakes to keep the exchange rate at a specified level. The third arrangement is a truly flexible floating exchange rate. Now, experience has shown that both the first and the third are tenable arrangements that can survive. There is no case of any country that had a floating exchange rate having an international financial crisis. They may have internal problems, but they don't have balance-of-payment problems because the adjustable exchange rate prevents it.

On the other hand, there are numerous examples of pegged exchange rates which have had the experience the East Asian countries have. A central bank and a pegged exchange rate is an untenable combination. If a country wants to have a fixed exchange rate it should abolish the central bank and adopt a currency board. If it doesn't want to do that, it's best off floating.

The problem was caused by the attempt to combine a pegged exchange rate with an activist central bank. The source of the breakdown was the bad policies followed by the central bank. If there had not been a pegged exchange rate, those policies would have been reflected internally, but would not have created an international financial crisis.

NR: If there's a recession here, what effect would that have on efforts to privatize Social Security?

Friedman: I don't see why it should have any effect on efforts to privatize Social Security. Whether we have a recession or not, it is highly desirable to privatize Social Security. And we must not privatize Social Security by promising people they can indefinitely earn 20 per cent a year in the stock market. They can't. The stock market will yield a very good return on the average over a period. But the return we've been getting over the last few years is unrepeatable.

NR: What, if anything, should the Fed or Congress be doing now?

Friedman: The Fed should be doing what it has been doing, controlling the flow of money to keep inflation or deflation from developing. So far as Congress is concerned, the best thing would be to repeal most of the laws it has passed. □

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Informing Workers of Their Beck Rights

THE WASHINGTON POST
FEC Probes AFL-CIO Ads In Campaign
Potential Link With Democrats Studied
Associated Press
AFL-CIO plans vast effort in '98 elections
Leader John Sweeney says he'll send hundreds into the field to battle for control of Congress.
But Mr. Sweeney said later in an interview that TV ads were "very expensive," and that he has not decided how much labor will spend on targeted ads this

Right to Work Foundation Steps Up Effort to Stop Use of Forced Dues for Politics

The end of massive union politicking with the compulsory dues dollars of thousands of working men and women may be in sight as more and more workers are coming to understand that the Foundation-won 1988 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Beck v. Communications Workers* gives them the right not to support union political activity.

The *Beck* decision is the law! But many workers (some 78% in a recent poll) still don't know that they cannot be compelled to pay for anything beyond the cost of collective bargaining. Union officials, of course, don't inform them and the Clinton Administration goes out of its way to keep workers in the dark.

Why? The answer is simple: money and power. If all union-covered, private sector employees in states without protective Right to Work laws learned of their Beck rights, and only 25% chose to become *Beck* objectors, Big Labor would be stripped of at least $532 million each year! Is it any wonder that union officials go out of their way to keep *Beck* a secret?

But the end of this practice is in sight. Only last month the Foundation won another case in the U.S. Supreme Court that ended the practice of forcing employees into union-run "arbitration" proceedings when they object to their dues being used for politics. And this Fall the Court will hear arguments in another Foundation supported case. In *Marquez v. Screen Actors Guild* the court will decide whether to strike down contract language that deceives workers into thinking they must be full dues paying "members in good standing" of a union in order to keep their jobs.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation has fought since 1968 to establish the rights of workers to stop the use of compulsory dues for politics. We are now stepping up our efforts throughout the country to inform and secure the political rights of the working men and women of America.

If you need our help or if you would like to help support the program, give us a call at 1-800-336-3600 or visit our web site at <www.nrtw.org>.

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(703) 321-8510

The National Right To Work Legal Defense Foundation, established in 1968, is a nonprofit, charitable organization providing free legal aid to employees whose human or civil rights have been violated by abuses of compulsory unionism.

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placent American President embraces it uncritically as a "strategic partner." Russia, even while begging for American aid, arms China and Iran and coddles Iraq. Western Europe drifts more and more into the posture of a rival rather than an ally. And the world economy drifts toward the edge of major crisis, likely to further exacerbate international tensions.

Monica Lewinsky is not responsible for this. The failure of this Presidency is not accidental but philosophical. The Clinton Administration is allergic to geopolitical thought, uncomfortable with the use of military force, and besotted with Wilsonian illusions of a harmonious world community prospering under the leadership of the United Nations.

It is time for a wholesale intellectual challenge to Mr. Clinton's foreign policy. But for the Republicans to present a credible alternative, they must begin again to deserve the reputation for foreign-policy seriousness that they enjoyed under Presidents Nixon and Reagan. This means, first, reversing the deterioration of the U.S. defense capability by boosting the Pentagon budget, deploying missile defenses, and ending the cultural war against the military spirit. It also means maintaining faith in economic freedom, including free trade, even—especially—if this proves to be an era of creeping global recession; and insisting on bold reforms of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (see "Global Risk," p. 24).

We demonstrate our faith in freedom not by crusades or indiscriminate intervention but by tending to our interests in a turbulent era. We can bolster the democratic world by strengthening economic and political ties between North America and Western and Central Europe (see "Anglo-Saxon Attitude," *NR*, Sept. 14). We can protect peace by working to overthrow the Iraqi regime. We can promote freedom through the National Endowment for Democracy and the radio stations that broadcast the truth into Cuba and the parts of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East where freedom still languishes. History may be on the side of the democracies, but only if the leading one does its job.

Rest in Publicity

IN the hyper-emotional week that followed Princess Diana's death a year ago, a vast torrent of grief flowed forth. It was said to herald, variously, the softening of the British stiff upper lip, the approaching end of the British Royal Family, and the arrival of a new "politics of empathy" that would favor Tony Blair and Bill Clinton (whose lower lip is more celebrated than his upper, largely for being bitten into soft submission).

In retrospect there is no mystery about the popular reaction to Diana's death. She was young, beautiful, a princess, and sad—a combination of qualities that a Harlequin novelist might feel excessive in a heroine. Her untimely passing prompted us to recall sentimentally that those whom the gods love die young. Mother Teresa's death the following week reminded us that this is neither a statistical nor a Christian truth. But it is undoubtedly a comforting emotion. For if Diana was well-intentioned in her public life, she was also wounded, muddled, and occasionally malicious in her private life. She reminds us of ourselves, of our occasional resolutions to be more consistently good, and of the inevitable time-limit by which we must fulfill such resolutions. Above all, the way she crashed into that limit—fleeing with a perhaps unworthy lover, pursued by the Furies, into a dark tunnel, never to emerge—had elements of Greek tragedy, grand opera, and Jungian symbolism.

The broader interpretations of the grief now seem farfetched. If the stiff upper lip—a nineteenth-century American phrase, by the way—has softened, that is a broader Western phenomenon largely explicable as the result of widely distributed prosperity, the welfare state, and the declining challenges of a post-imperial, post–Cold War world. The stern unbending courage required at Rorke's Drift is less relevant to making computers or selling financial services; but as the Falklands War (and for Americans the Gulf War) showed, it can still be summoned up when needed. Indeed a perverse version of the martial virtues can be seen in Britain's soccer hooligans.

The Royal Family—which, contrary to myth, was extremely popular before Diana—has recovered its self-confidence. Polls suggest that Prince Charles is popular both as a potential monarch and as a parent; that Diana's sons are a new asset for the "family firm" and no longer rivals to their father; and that even a princely marriage to Camilla Parker Bowles might be acceptable to the public. This posthumous victory of the Royals over Diana—for such it unsentimentally is—represents the triumph of the solid virtue of duty over Diana's glamour and charisma.

And it was always absurd to equate the emotional politics of empathy and compassion with Mr. Blair's New Labour, which is the most buttoned-up, self-controlled, tightly scripted political movement in Britain since Cromwell's New Model Army. Its "empathy" substitutes expressions of feeling for actual help to the disadvantaged in society. In the U.S., of course, Mr. Clinton's politics of empathy has come to symbolize insincerity, lack of self-

Murphy's Law

North Korea's missile flew
Over neighboring Honshu,
Landing with a splash that made
Cranes cringe, while, where ancients wade
In the calm September sea,
Eyes peered upward anxiously.

—W. H. von Dreele

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control, and avoiding responsibility. Again, the virtues coming back into fashion are those that emphasize duty and restraint rather than feeling and emotion.

It is, in short, a libel on Princess Diana to associate her with the temporary fashions of parties, prime ministers, and Presidents. Her family seems to agree with this. They have asked that, after this year of prolonged public mourning, she finally be allowed to rest in peace. She is now in the hands of God, and the world's opinion is no longer of use to her—if it ever was.

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Bill:

I noted with surprise and dismay your column discussing gay rights and hate-crimes legislation in the *New York Post* on Monday, July 27. Regardless of the difference of opinion between the Anti-Defamation League and yourself over these issues, I am mystified that in the context of this column you would go out of your way to slight our organization by writing, "Anti-discrimination movements are not responsible for the excesses of the Anti-Defamation League." What excesses do you have in mind? What exactly are you talking about?

I'm not going to posture to you about our organization being the "most responsible" anti-discrimination group around—all organizations consider themselves responsible, and their agenda reasonable. Instead, I'd invite you to consider our record. I know we're never going to agree on every issue, and it's not my intention to lecture you about your opinions, but to single us out so gratuitously is unfair; it smacks of the very demonization you purport to decry.

For our part, we're going to continue to devote ourselves to the mission we set for ourselves 85 years ago: to fight, indeed, against discrimination and defamation of Jews, and to work for the equality of all citizens. In this respect, we pride ourselves on the importance of saying what is *not* anti-Semitism, just as much as what is. We will interpret the nature of this struggle, and the meaning of equality, in our terms; we expect you will do the same. But we hope we can count on you as a friend, and not an antagonist.

If you'd like to discuss these matters, please be in touch.

Sincerely,
Abraham H. Foxman
National Director, Anti-Defamation League

Dear Abe:

Oh dear, you force me back to the deep archive on my dealings with the ADL, which includes (I am proud to say) the award you gave me in 1991. But to make it brief:

The ADL has a checkered past in its dealings with American conservatism. To quote myself, writing in 1991, ". . . back [then], the ADL was tempted to identify American conservatism with fascism [and] we regularly gave it hell and welcomed its reformation at the hands of Nathan Perlmutter, who was a contributor to NATIONAL REVIEW."

And then in one of my columns (Jan. 20, 1992): "The Anti-Defamation League really ought to make some effort to put its house in order. It is the veteran Jewish organization devoted to tracking down and exposing bigotry and to promoting civil rights. But in its search for opportunistic publicity it makes quite embarrassing errors. For instance, the award its Boston chapter made early in the month to Dartmouth President James Freedman. . . ." I'm sure you recall the details. If not, I'll send you a copy of the column, and of my book *In Search of Anti-Semitism,* in which I track (among other things) the paradox of the ADL giving a clearance to *The Dartmouth Review* and then awarding a prize to President Freedman for slandering it.

I am pleased that the ADL has recorded my very long opposition to anti-Semitism. But the ADL is about all kinds of things and you should understand the resentment some who back the basic aim of the ADL feel at being coopted, as you try to do, to such causes as: opposing English-only legislation, resisting a Colorado plebiscite that sought to prevent legislation giving gays special rights, protesting the Catholic bishop's right in Boston to specify which groups could participate in the St. Patrick's Day parade, deploring this & that involving the activities of the National Rifle Association, applauding the end of the all-male tradition of the Virginia Military Institute.

And on and on. The ADL tends to be a left-leaning comprehensive lobby. Even so, to quote myself, it is wrong for those who subscribe to the ADL's high-minded founding purposes to be entirely alienated by your excesses. Since, dear Abe, it was you who provoked me, forgive me if I quote a little homily on the subject I wrote some years ago:

"Public organizations that need financial support and publicity are tempted from time to time to suspend their sense of discrimination for the limelight. Ten years ago the ADL gave a prize to Hugh Hefner of *Playboy*, I kid you not, for his contributions to civil liberty. The award cited 'the empire he founded [which] has had a far-reaching impact, not only on the publishing industry, but on the mores of American society as well.' To which this columnist responded at the time, 'That is correct. Any serious disciple of Hugh Hefner would not hesitate to purr anti-Semitic lovelies into the ears of his bunny, if that was what was required to effect seduction. . . . The invitation specifies 'black tie.' Well, if the guests arrive wearing only black ties, that will be more than some of the guests wear at Hef's other parties."

It is always good to hear from you, but, when in this vein, limit yourself, pray, to once every year or two.

Cordially, **—WFB**

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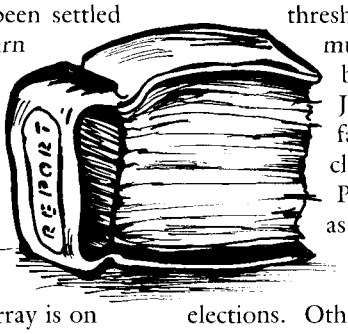
BREAD & CIRCUSES

Report Card

BY the time you read this, Kenneth Starr will almost certainly have forwarded to the House of Representatives his report on possible impeachable offenses committed by President Clinton. The question now is what the ground rules will be for the House's review of the findings. The House must adopt, by simple majority, a resolution governing the Judiciary Committee's investigative authority and members' access to the report. Only after these matters have been settled will the public finally learn the results of Mr. Starr's investigation.



Until recently, Republicans were divided over how to handle the report, with many of them wishing the whole thing would somehow dispose of itself. But now the disarray is on the Democratic side. The House's next move—like the fate of the Clinton Presidency itself—depends on how the Democrats resolve it.

Republicans are inclined to support Henry Hyde's desire to limit access to the full report until his Judiciary Committee has reviewed its findings. Hyde worries that full disclosure, particularly of grand-jury testimony, could at once protect the guilty (by compromising possible criminal prosecutions) and damage innocent third parties. So the Republicans' draft resolution provides that after the House Sergeant at Arms takes custody of Starr's report, the Judiciary Committee will consider it behind closed doors, in executive session.

Under this Republican plan, other Members of Congress and the public would have immediate access to the executive summary of the report. Additional material from the full report would be released as the Committee conducted its initial review. The trouble with this plan is that the inevitable leaks would threaten the kind of orderly, judicious review that Rep. Hyde wants.

The Democrats, meanwhile, don't even have a plan. Whereas Henry Hyde has the complete confidence of his Republican colleagues, Hyde's Democratic counterpart, the erratic John Conyers of Michigan, emphatically does not have the confidence of his chief, Minority Leader Dick Gephardt. So Gephardt hopes to assume a larger role for himself, which means he has to get *his* counterpart, Speaker Newt Gingrich, more directly involved in the process.

Democrats are also divided on the threshold question of how much of the report should be made public. Rep. John Dingell (D., Mich.) favors immediate full disclosure so as to resolve the President's fate as quickly as possible—and avoid any unpleasant revelations just before November's elections. Others would rather postpone receipt of the report until after the elections, and still others would try to minimize damage to the President by releasing information in dribs and drabs (as the White House has done to great effect so far).

No doubt plenty of Democrats hope with Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (N.Y.) that "we can have this all behind us in six weeks' time," but that will happen only if they can persuade Clinton to resign. Republicans don't anticipate a full impeachment inquiry until after the elections. If, after its initial review, the Judiciary Committee determines that the Starr report contains substantial and credible evidence of impeachable acts, it will request authority to conduct an impeachment inquiry. A majority of the House would have to agree to launch the inquiry and provide the Committee resources for a full investigation.

The Committee would then call witnesses, and the President would be represented by counsel. At this stage, the Committee would no longer be limited to the evidence of wrongdoing contained in the Starr report. It would be free to investigate other possible misdeeds by the Clinton Administration, such as whether the Internal Revenue Service conducted politically motivated audits.

At that point the political community will still be debating the relative merits of congressional censure, resignation, or impeachment. But one imaginative GOP aide in the Senate worries that the President might have a constitutional trick up his sleeve. If there is bipartisan support for impeachment, the President, suffering from clinical depression, might invoke the Twenty-Fifth Amendment and step aside temporarily. Acting President Gore would then assume the duties of the office, until a deeply remorseful President Clinton emerged from some clinic and was pronounced "healed." It's a far-fetched scenario, but it shows that the "Comeback Kid" still stalks the nightmares of conservatives.

IN fact, the President will be removed from office if, and only if, Democrats decide that he must go. Through each and every scandal Democrats aggressively defended their President and attacked his accusers. But the first defectors have now appeared. By pinning responsibility squarely on the President, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (Conn.) and others have made it clear that Ken Starr cannot be blamed for Clinton's predicament. That robs the White House of its central argument. And Democrats who have asserted that the President is in the clear if the Starr report contains evidence "only" of lying under oath in a civil case must now contend with Sen. Moynihan's declaration that such behavior is an "impeachable offense."

Nor is it likely that the President can rescue himself by battling the Republican Congress on the issues this fall, as some Democrats are urging. In late August, the Pew Research Center asked Americans what one word best describes Bill Clinton. The top choice wasn't "effective," but "liar" (offered by 42 per cent), with another 18 per cent favoring "dishonest," and 12 per cent "untrustworthy." The President cannot advance his own policy agenda, or anyone else's political agenda.

But then he has never done much for other Democrats. Since his election they have lost 52 House seats, 12 Senate seats, and 14 governorships—and those losses will mount in November. My bet is that over the next few weeks, congressional Democrats will finally decide they have suffered enough.

—KATE O'BEIRNE

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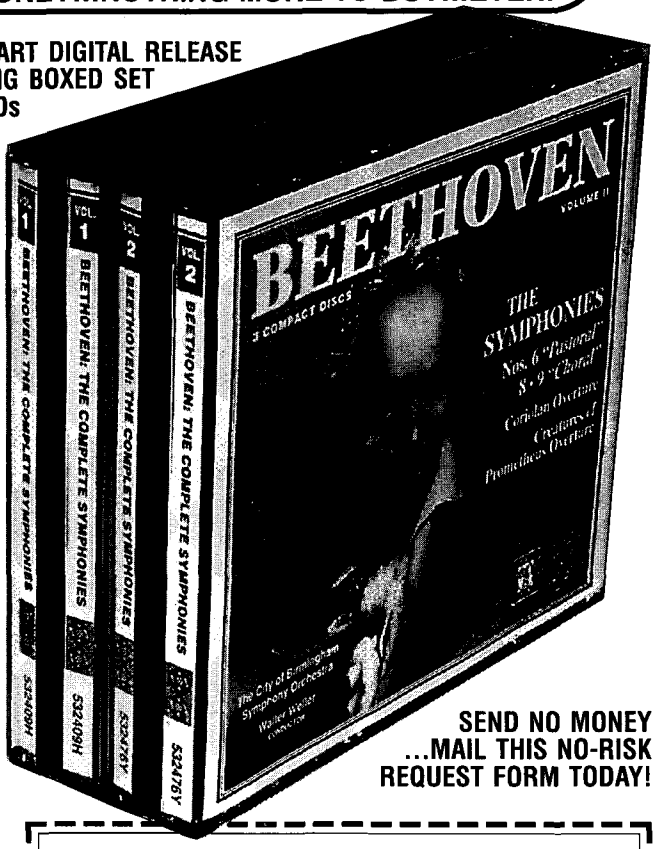

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RULE OF LAWLESSNESS

Russian Rubble

The root of Russia's crisis is not economic, but moral.

DAVID SATTER

AFTER almost seven years of supposedly free-market reforms, Russia today is poised on the brink of a social and political catastrophe, and the events of Russia's cataclysmic past form a somber backdrop for increasingly urgent discussions of the possibility of mass unrest. There has been such talk before. It surfaced during *perestroika*, subsided after the fall of the Soviet Union, and then became insistent after the forcible dispersal of the Supreme Soviet in October 1993. But rarely has the fear of disorder been as pointed—or as justified by conditions—as it is now.

In the wake of ruble devaluation, an effective default on $40 billion worth of treasury bills, and a 90-day moratorium on the repayment of foreign debt, Western businessmen, long mesmerized by Russia's supposedly golden future, have begun to understand the dangers of treating Russia like a normal country. It will be many years before they risk investing in Russia again.

More important for international stability, however, is the fact that the Russian financial crisis, coming on top of a catastrophic economic depression, threatens to drive the majority of the Russian population into destitution, and raises the prospect of widespread hunger.

Russians are endowed with legendary patience—which is often a reflection of the helplessness of their situation—but there are signs that their patience is wearing thin. A poll conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs before the beginning of the present crisis showed that 37 per cent of the population believed that mass disorder was possible and 23 per cent were ready to take up arms themselves. Those figures are likely to have increased as a result of the present uncertainty.

Gen. Aleksandr Lebed, certain to be a candidate in the next presidential election, said in a recent interview that the army was in "a revolutionary mood" and that "power in the country could collapse within 24 hours." He suggested the following scenario: A woman whose child has died from hunger or medical neglect takes the child's body and begins walking with it down the main street of a Russian industrial city. In the current atmosphere such an act could easily trigger a mass insurrection. Troops sent in to restore order refuse to fire on the crowds, and when other units are ordered to intervene, soldiers begin firing on each other, giving the impetus for the outbreak of pitched battles on a nationwide scale.

How did Russia come to this pass? For seven years, it has been pillaged by its so-called "reformers." The results have been the creation of a criminal business oligarchy possessing vast wealth and the impoverishment of the mass of the population.

The roots of the present crisis go back to the late 1980s, when the reformers, who worked in Soviet ideological institutions, developed the ideas that were to guide the Russian reform process. Denied the highest positions in the Communist system, they became convinced free-marketers but retained their Marxist faith in the primacy of economic relations over considerations of law and morality. If Communists argued that once the means of production were socialized, a classless society would appear, automatically assuring freedom and unlimited wealth, the reformers argued that if only property were put in private hands, there would be the same utopian result.

The reformers' lack of respect for law had two serious consequences. In the first place, it led them to implement the reforms as rapidly as possible in order to make the destruction of the previous system irreversible. It also led them to view criminals as allies: the reformers believed they would be supported only by the wealthy, and they saw no wealthy persons in Russia other than those who had accumulated capital in the shadow economy.

The speed of the reform process and its criminalization traduced the future of Russia, creating an economy that could only generate impoverishment because it was based not on productivity but on theft.

The first grand act of theft was the confiscation of the Russian people's savings through the hyperinflation that resulted from the uncontrolled freeing of prices in January 1992. Money that had been saved for decades by millions of people disappeared overnight.

Boris Yeltsin by Roman Genn

Mr. Satter is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and the Jamestown Foundation and a visiting scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He is the author of Age of Delirium: The Decline and Fall of the Soviet Union *(Knopf).*

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The elimination of the "ruble overhang"—in other words, the money in people's savings accounts accumulated through a lifetime of hard work—was followed by the second act of theft, the government's program of privatization, which took place in two stages: voucher privatization and money privatization. During voucher privatization, each citizen was entitled to a voucher with a face value of 10,000 rubles and was supposed to use it to buy a share of Russian industry. In practice, however, these vouchers were useless to individual citizens and were bought up on the street by shadowy commercial and criminal organizations which used them to purchase Russian industry at giveaway prices.

During money privatization, the prices for desirable enterprises were fixed, with the help of local privatization officials, so as to benefit criminal business conglomerates. Many auctions took place only on paper. If genuine bidding did occur and a powerful group was outbid by an insistent competitor, the successful bidder could easily pay for his tenacity with his life.

In the end, giant enterprises were sold for pennies. The Zil automobile works, with $1 billion in assets, went for $4 million; Gazprom, with control over roughly a third of the world's natural gas, was valued at $230 million; and the national electric company sold for $650 million.

Finally, the reformers opened the way for the theft of revenues from the state budget. After the forced dispersion of the parliament in October 1993, 12 banks, all of which had supported Yeltsin, were "empowered" to handle government accounts. These banks—by delaying payments on government obligations and using budgetary funds to give short-term interbank credits at rates as high as 400 per cent—reaped huge profits on the state's money. They were soon joined by regional banks and enterprise directors. In the meantime, the nonpayment of salaries became a permanent feature of Russian life.

The prices for desirable enterprises were fixed so as to benefit criminal business conglomerates.

The result of a reform process which was run for the benefit of well-connected insiders was that the Russian economy suffered a collapse that was unprecedented in the country's postwar history. In the last seven years, the gross domestic product declined by half. This did not happen even under Nazi occupation.

The Russian government now owes workers approximately $9 billion in unpaid wages, and privatized enterprises owe roughly the same amount. This means that millions of workers wait from three to eight months to be paid, and 40 per cent of the Russian people are being forced to grow their own food in order to survive.

At the same time, money is being moved out of the country in enormous quantities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs estimates that in recent years $350 billion has been exported illegally from Russia. This money is taken out of the country in suitcases past the customs inspectors at Sheremetevo-2 airport,

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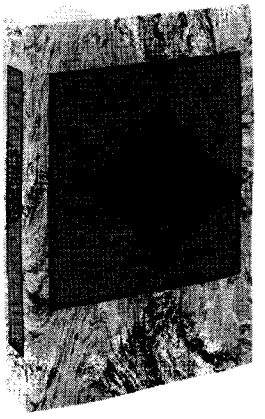

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transferred abroad in increments of less than $10,000, or sent as payments to dummy firms controlled by the sender for services that were never rendered.

For a time, the Russian government was able to stay afloat with the help of oil and gas revenues, but two developments pushed it into crisis. The first was the fall in commodity prices, which cut export earnings in a country which is now heavily dependent on imports.

At the same time, the government exhausted its ability to finance the budget deficit—itself the product of the government's inability to collect taxes—with the help of short-term government bonds (GKOs). Payments on the GKOs, which had very high yields, were continually covered by assuming more obligations until the point was reached where a third of the budget was used to service domestic debt. With falling revenues, these payments became unsustainable.

There now is a feeling, shared across virtually the entire Russian political spectrum, that reform has reached an impasse and some steps toward the reinstitution of a centrally directed economy—including an increase in the money supply, renationalization, and price controls—are unavoidable if the country is to avoid chaos.

These steps are certain to be viewed in the West as a "retreat from reform," but they actually offer the only hope of a period of stabilization in Russia and, if implemented judiciously, could help to ward off the unrest that nearly everyone in Russia fears.

What is really important, however, is what will follow any period of stabilization. No economic program alone is capable of solving Russia's problem, because, at its heart, Russia's problem is not economic but moral.

As long as 150 million people are repeatedly shown that the best way to acquire property is to steal it, it is absolutely useless to talk about the merits of "shock therapy" versus government regulation. Any economic measure introduced into this atmosphere will be immediately deformed by the underlying immorality of the society and the political system.

Russia needs, first of all, to re-examine the economic determinism which has guided every Russian government since the Bolsheviks seized control in 1917. In fact, morality is not the product of a "correct" set of economic relations. On the contrary, it is what makes a normal market economy possible.

Russia under Communism endured more than seventy years of mental and ethical annihilation. This is why the first priority of the post-Communist reformers should have been establishing the rule of law and the inviolability of the individual. Once a government is installed which understands this simple fact, the way will at last be cleared for Russia to embark on a real economic reform program and perhaps climb out of the economic and moral morass which threatens to engulf her. □

Global Risk

The best cure for the current crisis of global capitalism is American leadership.

LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY

AT the start of this decade America and its allies stood victorious in their long battle in the Cold War. Capitalism and democracy were seen as the models of the twenty-first century. Countries around the world which had stood on the sidelines during the ideological struggle between systems rushed to implement domestic versions of these successful models. The result was the entry of hundreds of millions of new workers into the global capitalist system and an expansion of world trade, living standards, and freedom that is unparalleled in world history.

Now, suddenly, there are some second thoughts about market-based capitalism. The market crises of the past year have caused tens of millions of people to lose their hard-earned places in the global middle class. Before this is over, some ten trillion dollars of household wealth will probably have been destroyed world wide. A global recession not unlike that of the 1930s is a possibility, and the history of that decade suggests that democracy, as well as capitalism, may be threatened.

Why did this happen? There are both political and economic lessons to be learned. If we are to avoid an outcome like that of the 1930s, supporters of democracy and capitalism must begin to take steps now to forestall a disaster. This is especially important for American conservatives. Conservatism's ideological adversaries here at home—including some whose commitment to markets and capitalism is a recent development and not well entrenched—will soon be arguing (as they did during much of the Cold War) that big government must "direct" markets if they are to be truly successful. Their views must not be allowed to prevail.

First, it is important to remember that two factors accounted for our Cold War victory: the superiority of our system and the resolve of our leaders. Capitalism's superiority at producing goods and services meant that we were able to fulfill our defense commitments with an ever-shrinking share of our national wealth while the Soviet Union was forced to spend an ever-larger share to keep pace. Nothing has changed in the 1990s with regard to the superiority of markets and capitalism.

What has changed is the resolve of our leaders. In 1992, having won the Cold War and reaffirmed our dominance in the Gulf War, voters turned away from an internationalist President, George Bush. Bill Clinton campaigned essentially on the promise that he would ignore international matters and focus on domestic concerns. He has more than fulfilled this particular promise.

A global recession not unlike that of the 1930s is a possibility.

And it has had consequences abroad. Asserting global leadership often

Mr. Lindsey, a former governor of the Federal Reserve, is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

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requires sacrificing your own narrowly defined national objectives. Domestic macroeconomic policy must be sensitive to the demands of global leadership. Trade policy must be international and evenhanded, and not controlled by the domestic export lobby. America and Bill Clinton were clearly not prepared to make those sacrifices. Instead, the new Administration pursued a narrowly nationalistic economic policy which placed our short-term self-interest—and too often the economic interests of the the President's political and financial supporters—ahead of the demands of global leadership.

THE new Administration began by adopting a "weak dollar" strategy. Treasury officials abandoned time-tested statements on foreign-exchange policy and left the clear impression on markets that they sought a weak dollar in order to foster American exports, particularly at the expense of the Japanese. The use of devaluation as a stimulative economic tool had long been championed by key Administration officials in their past academic lives, and was especially helpful to the industrial unions in the President's political base. Administration statements helped take the dollar down to a new low of 80 yen in 1995. Many of the Asian countries tied to the dollar benefited, as they also became extremely competitive. Investment flowed into these countries.

Suddenly things changed. The Chinese, seeking to regain an edge over their competitors, devalued the renminbi. American firms saw their Japanese competitors buying up plants and equipment throughout Asia at bargain prices because the yen was so strong. The Administration reversed course and started talking up the dollar against the yen, a policy which continued until the U.S. intervened in June of this year to again support the yen over the dollar.

All told, the dollar–yen exchange rate—the key to trade between the world's two largest economies and the key to Asia's economy—has gyrated down by a third and then up by 75 per cent during the first five and a half years of the Clinton Administration. Such wild swings helped destabilize Asian currency arrangements and trade flows and led directly to the present Asian crisis. Of course, currencies always fluctuate in a market environment. But these fluctuations were unduly large and were the result of deliberate policy preferences by the supposed global economic leader.

U.S. trade policy, particularly toward Asia, also abandoned any pretext of freedom from domestic political considerations. Allegations that Commerce Department trade missions to Asia were deliberately packed with Democratic donors dogged Secretary Ron Brown before his death. Most alarmingly, the Administration ignored the deteriorating conditions in Asia last fall as it continued to pursue an aggressive trade strategy. In September, America's trade representative slapped special sanctions on South Korea, just as its economy was entering a free fall. A month later, ocean-going trade between the U.S. and Japan ceased for a day over a $4-million dispute. Markets in both countries were disrupted over an expense that could have been covered by renting out the Lincoln bedroom a few extra nights.

The current second thoughts about democratic capitalism are the result not of a fundamental change in the merits of markets, but of the absence of leadership from the world's leading market economy. Pursuing market advantages not through economic superiority but through political clout has become more and more widespread. This is something the world's leader should discourage, and certainly not condone by example.

Supporters of democratic capitalism must now insist that America reassert its leadership role. Our next President must focus on global economic matters as well as security concerns, and must be willing to use the influence of his office to get our allies to join us in what will probably be a major clean-up effort.

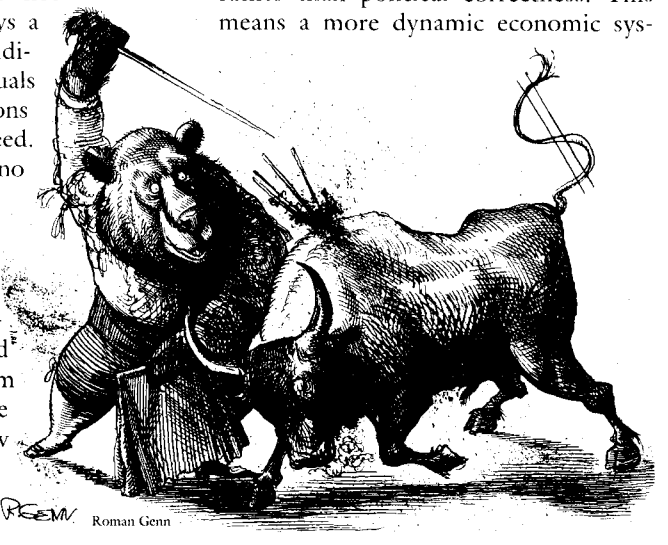
Defenders of global democratic capitalism must also be innovative economically. This must start with the recognition that markets are not perfect. There is always a "cycle" to business conditions because individuals are driven by emotions such as fear and greed. The current cycle is no exception.

As already noted, the productive capacity of millions of people was suddenly added to the world economy. Optimism was everywhere. We heard talk of a "New Age." In short, greed prevailed as investors everywhere believed this new environment offered a splendid chance to make money by taking risks they would not otherwise have taken. In the U.S., people put ever-increasing fractions of their wealth into the stock market, while mutual funds invested in stock markets located in cities their investors probably couldn't find on a world map.

That kind of irrational exuberance funds excessive investments which ultimately do not provide expected returns. As disappointments mount, lenders suddenly become cautious. Economies tighten and credit becomes scarce. Liquidations occur to meet debt-service requirements. This drives down the prices of many commodities and spreads the losses into otherwise healthy businesses. Fear begins to take hold, replacing greed, as investors seek to preserve what capital they have and forget about taking risks to produce big returns.

No supporter of capitalism has ever argued that this cycle is pretty. But it is inevitable, and can even be seen as useful. Fear and greed drive decisions in command economies as well as in markets. Giant industrial works with no real market for their output and grandiose but impractical development projects littered the landscape of the socialist world. Carrying a party card or working for the state does not exempt one from thinking big thoughts. Nor does it protect one from the fear of being blamed should things turn out badly ("bureaucratic inertia" is just the non-market counterpart of "cover your ass").

But the market tends to correct fear- and greed-driven mistakes much more quickly than the bureaucratic system. It also tends to reward people more directly for economic correctness rather than political correctness. This means a more dynamic economic sys-



Roman Genn

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tem driven by what Joseph Schumpeter termed "creative destruction." The success of capitalism requires both the innovation and experimentation of booms and the termination of failed projects in busts.

Democratic capitalism has developed a set of devices to minimize the social pain of this process. One key element is bankruptcy. The individual who engaged in a failed experiment has his personal stake wiped out, but is allowed to restart from scratch, free of the obligations he incurred prior to his bankruptcy. So, bankrupt individuals have an incentive to become productive again. Meanwhile the capital assets that bankrupt individuals lose are placed in the hands of someone in a strong financial situation and so are quickly put back to productive use. Importantly, lenders are put at risk by this process, and thus have an incentive to be diligent about the loans they make.

In the current crisis, the U.S. has failed to exploit the advantages of bankruptcy as a way of resolving bad loans. Our government, along with the International Monetary Fund, has instead chosen to leave much of the world in the equivalent of debtors' prison. While debt service is covered in the short term by the IMF, the debtors are expected to shrink their own consumption enough to allow them to repay their creditors over time.

Consider how this works. The crisis countries of Southeast Asia have, by devaluation and other IMF-imposed actions, increased their exports by $10 billion. They have reduced their imports by $110 billion. On net therefore, they are $120 billion better able to repay debts than before. But total demand has fallen $100 billion. As these hair-shirt policies are extended to more of the world, demand falls further and a localized problem turns into a global recession.

Insisting on debt repayment by countries that are obviously broke is as devastating to the world economy today as Smoot–Hawley and other beggar-thy-neighbor policies were in the 1930s. The Administration has fallen into this disastrous trap largely because of its lack of imagination, but political constraints have also played a role. Repayment of American investors in the Mexican crisis of 1994–95 drove our policy then, and its alleged success has led us to make the needs of American money-center banks a top priority today.

Believers in global democratic capitalism have an obligation to get the world out of this dead-end debtors' prison approach. This will require an assertion of national leadership, as our allies must go along with the new policies if they are to revive the global economy. Further, we must convince emerging countries that a truly global economy, in which anyone may invest and own assets anywhere, is in their interest too.

Those responsible for this mess will no doubt claim, once out of power, that global political and economic leadership is too costly. They prefer sacrificing the long-term benefits of global leadership to the demands of political donors and constituencies. Today we pay the price for that preference. Thus, conservatives must reassert our ideological leadership here at home. Voters need to be continually reminded that their sacrifices to make the world safe for capitalism and democracy are worth it. Short-term sacrifice to make long-term gains is what capitalism is all about. If we cannot persuade the voters of the United States that it is a choice worth making, what possible chance do we have of persuading the people of the world of the superiority of our system? □

Glum and Glummer

Social conservatives must learn to accentuate the positive.

RICHARD NADLER

"THE overriding question for believers now," writes Focus on the Family president Dr. James Dobson, "concerns how a God of justice can bless and preserve a nation in which murder is its centerpiece and sexual immorality its pastime. History teaches that the Holy One of Israel can not—and He will not—withhold judgment from those who flout the moral law of the universe."

William J. Bennett's 1993 *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* secularized this American apocalypse, tracing a thirty-year decline in the morals and mores that underlie civilized life. "Over the past three decades," he wrote, "we have experienced substantial social regression. Today the forces of social decomposition are challenging and in some instances overtaking the forces of social composition." The divorce rate had doubled, Bennett wrote, teen suicide tripled, illegitimate births quadrupled, violent crime quintupled. "Unless these exploding social pathologies are reversed, they will lead to the decline and perhaps even to the fall of the American republic."

We have not returned to the status quo ante the Great Society. But the progress of most of these pathologies has recently slowed, and in some cases there has been a measurable retreat. Conservatives have paid almost no attention, but the evidence suggests that the tide is starting to turn in America's culture wars. What's more, they can plausibly claim credit for much of the improvement.

First, the good news. The divorce rate, 5.3 per thousand in 1981, declined 19 per cent to 4.3 in 1996, its lowest level since 1973. The marriage rate, which had been falling, stabilized in 1993 at 9.0 per thousand. Births to unmarried women have stopped rising and even fallen a bit (1.7 per cent from 1994 to 1996). Since birth rates generally have dropped, the percentage of babies born to unwed mothers has flattened (at around 32.5 per cent)—a real achievement, given the steady rise of illegitimacy over the three previous decades.

And this figure may understate the shift in mores. The children of unwed mothers are likelier than other kids to abuse drugs or alcohol, drop out of school, commit crimes, contract sexually transmitted diseases, and become unwed parents themselves; the children of unwed teenaged mothers are even more prone to these behaviors. Hence a

Mr. Nadler is editor of K.C. Jones Monthly, *a Midwestern journal of opinion.*

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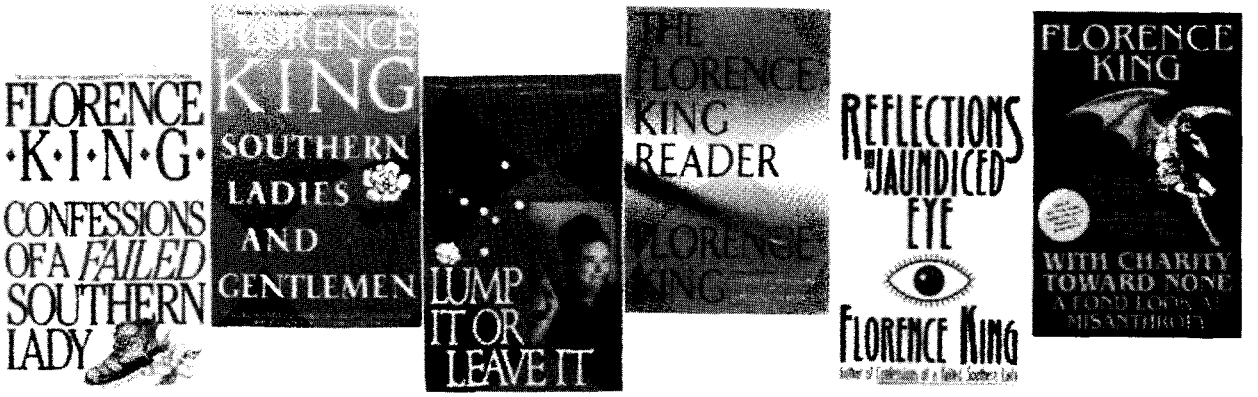

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decline in births to unwed teenagers portends an eventual decline in these social pathologies. The birth rate for unmarried teenaged girls dropped 7.5 per cent between 1994 and 1996. From 1991 to 1996, births to all teenagers (including married teens) declined 12 per cent. Among black teens, they fell 20.4 per cent.

To activists ranging from the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League to the National Right to Life Committee, the alternative to illegitimacy has been said to be abortion. But the decline in the former was achieved without the predicted explosion in the latter. The number of abortions in America each year dropped by more than 200,000, or 15.3 per cent, between 1990 and 1995. In 1995, the percentage of pregnancies ending in abortion hit its lowest level since 1976—and the number of abortions per thousand women diminished to 1975 levels, 20 per cent below its 1980 peak.

The evidence suggests that the tide is starting to turn in America's culture wars.

Driving these blessings was a small but significant moral advance. For the first time since these statistics have been kept, America witnessed a retreat from the sexual revolution. The proportion of 15-to-19-year-old girls with sexual experience had moved inexorably upward—from 29 per cent in 1970 to 36 per cent in 1975 to 55 per cent in 1990. But, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, that rate fell 9.1 per cent between 1990 and 1995, to 50 per cent.

The National Survey of Adolescent Males recorded a parallel increase in virginity among teenaged boys. From 1988 to 1995, the percentage of 15-through-19-year-old sexually experienced males declined by 8.6 per cent, from 60.4 per cent to 55.2 per cent.

The newspapers have made us more familiar with the welfare success story. In 1993, Bennett wrote, "Never before has the reach of government been greater or its purse larger—and never before have our social pathologies been worse." But since then, the number of people on relief has declined precipitously, from 14.1 million in January 1993 to 8.9 million in March 1998: a whopping 37 per cent decrease.

Liberals predicted that the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, centered on work requirements and time limits for cash aid, would generate intolerable pressures among the poor. But a General Accounting Office tracking study of seven states released this June found that six of them increased their job-placement rates for welfare recipients, by figures ranging from 32 to 295 per cent.

School shootings, and youth violence generally, have become a symbol of our cultural decline. In his May 1998 newsletter, Dr. Dobson wrote, "We should have known, should have anticipated, that children who have watched thousands of murders on prime-time television, followed the deadly exploits of Dr. Kevorkian, and been taught that there are no moral absolutes, might see little harm in gunning down their classmates."

Many criminologists thought the thirty-year surge of illegitimacy presaged an unstoppable crisis in youth violence. Indeed, juvenile infractions rose a staggering 43 per cent from 1989 to 1993.

Then this youth crime wave slammed into reverse. As Lois Fingerhut et al. report in the August 5 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, "Homicide rates have recently begun declining among persons 15 through 24 years old." The *JAMA* paper records a 12 per cent reduction in firearm homicides among black males in urban core areas between 1993 and 1995, and a 17.8 per cent decrease in firearm homicides among black males in medium-sized cities (population 250,000 to 1 million).

From 1995 to 1996, the FBI reported declines in the ratios of youths arrested for murder (down 9.6 per cent), forcible rape (8.2 per cent), and aggravated assault (12.5 per cent). Suicide decreased in tandem with other forms of youth violence, reversing decades of increase. In 1995 the suicide rate among 15-to-24-year-olds was the lowest it had been since 1992. And school killings in 1997–98—not numerous in any case—were down 27 per cent from 1992–93, according to the National School Safety Center.

In fact, Americans of all ages have become more law-abiding. The FBI's latest figures, for 1996, document the sixth straight year of falling rates of both violent crime and property crime. In 1996, America had its lowest crime rate since 1977. From 1992 to 1996, violent crime fell by 16.3 per cent; murder, by 20.4 per cent.

It isn't just the economy, stupid. Declining rates of suicide, violent crime, illegitimacy, abortion, and divorce; dramatic gains in adult independence and childhood innocence: no wonder Americans are happy. Conservatives are wrong to condemn that optimism as immoral, and the general public is right to tune such a message out. More's the pity. Religious conservatives deserve much of the credit for the social improvements they barely deign to acknowledge.

Over the past four years, a flood of social-science literature has confirmed the importance of religion in protecting children from going astray. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation has done research showing that frequent church attendance cuts the illegitimacy rate roughly by half. The Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health has found that "high levels of importance placed on religion and prayer" reduced the likelihood of drunkenness and substance abuse. On the core issue of teen sex, LSAH analysts found that traditionalist attitudes supported teen chastity. "Significant family factors associated with delaying sexual debut," wrote Dr. Michael D. Resnick et al. in *JAMA* (September 10, 1997), "included high levels of parent-family connectedness, parental disapproval of their adolescent being sexually active, and parental disapproval of their adolescent's using contraception." Contrary to liberal predictions, "perceived parent disapproval" was a stronger deterrent to teen pregnancy than was "effective contraceptive use [at] first/last sex."

OTHER factors associated with delayed sexual debut included a "high level of importance ascribed to religion and prayer" and a "pledge of virginity." The latter, much ridiculed, has been promoted by religious conservative groups, and by no one else. "Adolescents who reported having taken a pledge to remain a virgin were at significantly lower risk of early age of sexual debut," wrote Resnick et al. "Nearly 16 per cent of females and 10 per cent of males reported making such pledges."

Statistics from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth also indicate that the resurgence of teen virginity correlates with increases in the sex-education strategies favored by social conservatives. Among students receiving school-based sex education, a girl who

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We've Been BANNED

By the TOLERANT Jesuits

Today's Jesuits are known for being oh so tolerant. Their magazine, *America*, supports the late Cardinal Bernardin's Common Ground Initiative (CGI), which seeks to reconcile various "factions" in the Catholic Church by means of dialogue. Nonetheless, in an editorial *America* gently criticized the CGI for not reaching out broadly enough, for "stopping short of reconciling the hard-boiled among us," adding, "Sooner or later we are going to have to invite those we stereotype as 'hard-boiled' into the conversation."

Assuming that *America* would stereotype us as "hard-boiled" and taking *America* at its word, we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a frisky orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, placed a satirical ad in *America* headlined "Does St. Bozo's Parish No Longer Amuse You?" Three weeks after our ad appeared, *America* printed a letter accusing us of being "very callous" (uh, *hard-boiled*, dude) and of favoring "thought-control" (like *censorship*, man). In reply, *America* offered its "sincerest apologies" to its humor-impaired readers for running the ad, said the ad wouldn't have run had it not been for a "mix-up" in its competence-impaired office, and solemnly affirmed that the ad was "offensive," the Great Sacrilege in today's dumbed-down culture. And, striking a mighty blow against censorship, *America* banned all our "offensive" ads. Ah, you didn't know the liberal Jesuits maintain an Index of Forbidden Ads, did you?

St. Bozo

So, what did we say about the St. Bozo's parishes across the land that was so unutterable? Here's a synopsis: "The sense of the sacred has largely been banished. The bells, incense, votive candles, and Communion rail are gone. Statues of the saints are locked in the basement, replaced by balloons, banners with greeting-card sentiments, and other dime-store decorations. And we must clap, clap, clap for the band and the liturgical dancers and the clowns. Catholics alienated by trivialized or freakish Masses often jump ship. Indeed, church attendance among Catholics has dropped from 70%, just before the liturgical experiments began, to 25% today."

Apparently the truth hurts, especially defensive Jesuits who have so much to apologize for on account of their antics over the past three decades. Why not stand up to the liberal censors and find out what the open-minded Jesuits want to hide? Subscribe to the NEW OXFORD REVIEW!

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turned 18 in 1994 or 1995 had a 21.5 per cent greater chance of being taught abstinence than one who turned 18 between 1984 and 1988. She had a 183.3 per cent greater chance of being taught that AIDS could kill her. But she had only a 1.6 per cent greater chance of learning contraceptive techniques.

During the debate over welfare reform, social conservatives demanded that the financial incentives to illegitimacy be removed. They got part of what they wanted. The Welfare Reform Act incorporated a variety of dissuasions to births out of wedlock, and allowed states to design strategies of their own. It established grants for abstinence education, and a system of financial rewards for the states most successful in reducing unwed motherhood.

Some states launched their own reforms prior to its passage, as the GAO noted in its June report: "The new federal welfare reform law enacted strict new provisions with respect to teen parents, including providing 'no assistance for teenage parents who do not attend high school or other equivalent training program' and 'no assistance for teenage parents not living in adult-supervised settings.' According to some state officials with whom we spoke, these provisions can not only deter teens from having their first child, but perhaps more effectively can help to encourage teens who are already parents not to have any more children until they finish school and become self-sufficient."

Who, apart from religious conservatives, could claim credit for the fall in abortion ratios, rates, and numbers? The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services attributes the declines to "reduced access to abortion services, attitudinal changes concerning the decision to have an abortion or to carry a pregnancy to term, and a reduction in the number of unintended pregnancies." The pro-life movement has worked for each of these strategic goals.

No available studies measure the impact of pro-family shock troops like Promise Keepers (or, for that matter, the Million Man March) on declining divorce rates. Nor can we stipulate the impact of the Christian Coalition, Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, the American Family Association, and Concerned Women for America on illegitimacy. But who, apart from religious conservatives, supports traditional families in the public square?

Religious conservatives believe that crime earns punishment. It has been their elected candidates, at the local, state, and federal levels, who have forged coalitions to increase the resources of law enforcement and the resolve of sentencing judges. It is no longer controversial to assert that reductions in crime are closely linked to increased rates of arrest and conviction. Still controversial, though demonstrable, is the role of restored gun-rights in deterring crime: another position favored by social conservatives.

The Religious Right has promoted a society where property and persons are safer; where husband and wife are more likely to be committed and constant partners; where children are more innocent, and adults more protective of their innocence. Every part of this program is popular; no focus group rejects it. And it is starting to work. Yet religious conservatives hardly notice this success, let alone lay claim to it.

So much good news should not be hidden. For the sake of ten good men God would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah. Every day, millions of American men and women struggle to do right. It behooves those who encourage their efforts to celebrate the results.

Unfortunately, the apocalyptic style sells. It opens the hearts (and checkbooks) of many God-fearing people. But it closes the hearts of those who see self-righteousness in it. Christian conservatives, of all people, should not underestimate the power of good news. □

Fong Show

A Matt Fong victory in California could strengthen latent Republicanism among Asian-Americans.

JOHN J. MILLER

MODESTO, CALIF.

At Modesto's annual Harvest Lunch on August 27, three flag-bearing teenagers marched in line to an outdoor podium and prepared to lead nearly eight hundred of their neighbors in the Pledge of Allegiance. One of them approached the microphone, glanced at Old Glory, and said "Please turn to the . . . the . . ." Awkward pause. Suddenly, from the crowd: "The American flag." Everyone burst out laughing, including the embarrassed boy. California Treasurer and Republican senatorial candidate Matt Fong began his remarks a few moments later by saying: "It's okay to flub a few lines—I did it yesterday in my first debate. It's the values you represent in bringing the flag up here that count." Applause all around.

Fong's self-deprecation at once comforted and uplifted the crowd of mostly conservative farm Democrats—the kind of voters he'll need to attract in his neck-and-neck race against Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer. It also came as a big surprise. In the three months since Fong won a hotly contested GOP primary versus self-financed car-alarm magnate Darrell Issa, he has done nothing to refute his reputation as a Republican version of Al Gore: wonkish, wooden, and balding. In his televised Hollywood debate with Sen. Boxer on August 26, the bespectacled Fong was positively amateurish: reading from notes, repeating himself, botching lines ("Barbara, you're not soft on crime," he said at one point, meaning the exact opposite). Yet there was also something endearing about his performance; in the era of Slick Willie, Fong's unpolished demeanor has a refreshing ring of honesty.

Fong's ancestry is an important feature of his candidacy.

Furthermore, although the 44-year-old candidate is not a spellbinder, his campaign is of more than usual interest. The California GOP has the reputation of being terminally unpopular among

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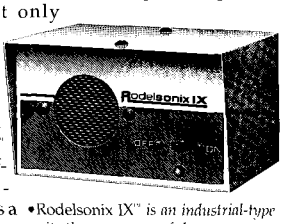

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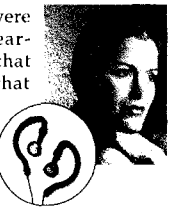

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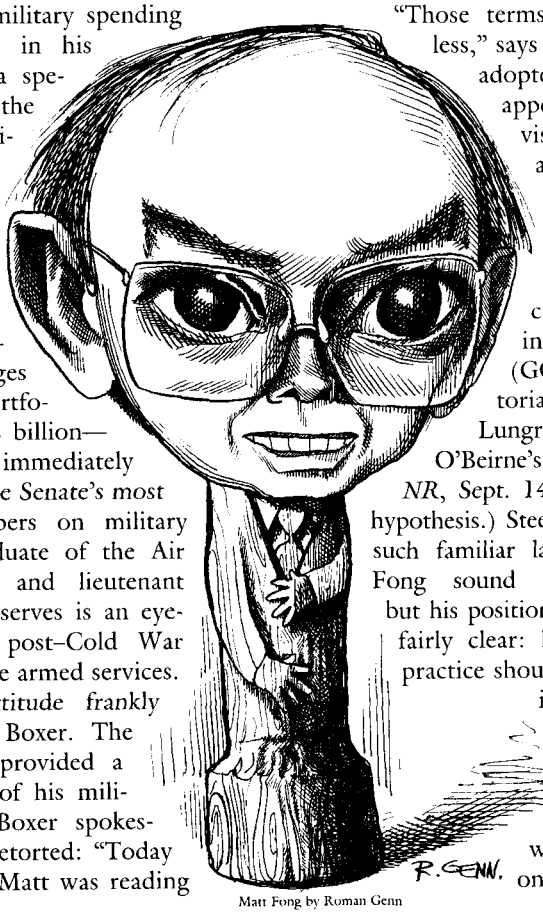
racial minorities. Fong, as a fourth-generation Chinese-American, could change all that. It's tempting not to dwell on Fong's ancestry because he doesn't make much of it himself. Yet it's an important feature of his candidacy. Exit polls reveal Asian-Americans to be among the most reliably Republican voters in the country. In 1996, they were more likely than whites to support Bob Dole. With non-Hispanic whites soon to become less than 50 per cent of the California population, the state GOP believes it will need a different kind of candidate to succeed. "The conservative message doesn't have to change," says the California GOP's political director, Mike Madrid, "but we need to put a new face on it." A Fong victory in November will show that conservatives have less to fear about growing minority participation in politics than they might think.

IF Fong doesn't win many points on style, he scores on substance. No other candidate this year is running so aggressively on a pro-defense platform. At a July meeting with journalists at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C., Fong quickly raised the subject even though everybody else wanted to talk about his views on Monica Lewinsky, abortion, and taxes. He hopes to boost military spending dramatically and in his speeches places a special emphasis on the need for an anti-ballistic-missile defense system. Although he is best known for his expertise on economic matters—as state treasurer, he manages an investment portfolio valued at $32 billion—Fong could immediately become one of the Senate's most influential members on military issues. This graduate of the Air Force Academy and lieutenant colonel in the reserves is an eyewitness to the post–Cold War evisceration of the armed services. His hawkish attitude frankly confounds Sen. Boxer. The day that Fong provided a detailed outline of his military priorities, Boxer spokesman Roy Behr retorted: "Today it sounded as if Matt was reading out of a twenty-year-old briefing book prepared for Ronald Reagan." He intended it as an insult.

This looks like a good year for incumbents, but Barbara Boxer may be the Senate's most vulnerable Democrat. A recent Field Poll showed the race to be in a dead heat—a very bad sign for an incumbent at this stage. Fong's advisors believe that if their candidate can raise $10 million or so for television commercials, he's a shoe-in. For a candidate who emerged from the June primary in debt, however, that may be a tall order. Then again, maybe not. "My campaign now takes Visa, MasterCard, and American Express," Fong helpfully explains at his fundraisers.

Matt Fong still has the reputation of a cautious conservative. He won't comment on President Clinton's personal behavior other than to call it "disgusting" (yet he clearly enjoys watching the arch-feminist Boxer, whose daughter is married to Hillary Clinton's brother, get hammered by the media for her hypocritical silence on Zippergate). For years he avoided answering questions on abortion by saying, correctly, that the offices he sought and held had nothing to do with it. Today he won't identify himself as either pro-life or pro-choice, a refusal that pleases neither side.



Matt Fong by Roman Genn

"Those terms are meaningless," says Fong, who was adopted and who appears to have a visceral dislike of abortion, even though he apparently has concluded that pro-life politicians can't win in California. (GOP gubernatorial nominee Dan Lungren—see Kate O'Beirne's "Golden Boy," *NR*, Sept. 14—will test that hypothesis.) Steering away from such familiar labels can make Fong sound mealy-mouthed, but his position on abortion is fairly clear: he believes the practice should be permitted in the first trimester of pregnancy and banned thereafter, which would put him on the right side in the most heated current abortion issue, the effort to ban partial-birth abortion. On most economic and education issues, meanwhile, Fong is a rock-solid right-winger; he strongly supports a flat tax, wants to eliminate the capital-gains tax and death tax, and consistently mentions school choice and education savings accounts in his campaign appearances.

Some conservatives doubt Fong's bona fides because he comes from a well-known Democratic family. Yet his switch from Democrat to Republican suggests a rare kind of political mettle. His mother, March Fong Eu, was a popular five-term Secretary of State in California before becoming President Clinton's ambassador to Micronesia in 1994. Her son could have inherited a ready-made political apparatus, except for the fact that his conscience stood in the way. "He's not from the conservative movement, and because of his mother it's amazing he's a conservative at all," says Heritage Foundation president Ed Feulner, who served with Fong on Jack Kemp's National Commission on Economic Growth and Tax Reform.

The Democrat-to-Republican "conversion process," as Fong calls it, began shortly after he realized his boyhood dream of attending the Air Force Academy, and then served on active duty in the late 1970s. "Jimmy Carter's views on the military were 180 degrees different from mine," he says. While earning a degree at Southwestern University School of Law in the early 1980s, Fong fell under the influence of Norm Karlin, a law-and-economics conservative. Fong also ran a small software business and became fed up with taxes and regulation. In 1988, he worked on Republican Pete Wilson's Senate campaign—a fact that delighted Wilson because Fong's mother had briefly pursued the Democratic nomination that year.

For Chinese-Americans, Fong is a source of immense ethnic pride. He won as much as 90 per cent of the Asian-American vote in June's open primary and probably will draw similarly high numbers in November. "He sends a really positive message to young people that you can work hard and be a leader," says Charlie Woo, a Los Angeles toy manufacturer who normally donates to Democrats but is supporting Fong this year. Asian Americans currently represent about 6 per cent of the California electorate, and although their votes arguably made the difference for

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Fong in the primary, their real importance to Republicans lies less in their raw numbers than in their bank accounts.

A highly educated and well-to-do group, Asian Americans could play the same role in the GOP that Jews have played in the Democratic Party: a dedicated minority whose financial support is a key to party success. Koreans and Vietnamese are already strongly Republican, the more numerous Chinese somewhat less so. The success of a figure like Matt Fong—which would make him the country's most visible politician of Asian descent—could help clinch the partisan loyalties of a group that is still up for grabs.

Republicans are excited by this prospect, even if they don't say so directly. At a Beverly Hills fundraiser in August, Pat Boone called Fong "the face of a changing America." That's a polite way of mentioning Fong's race without mentioning Fong's race. For years conservatives have worried about how the new demographics of California will affect their fate. If the rise of Matt Fong is an indication, their destiny may be sunnier than anyone expects. □

Neglected Solutions

Family preservation policies have proved to be a disaster. It's time to reconsider orphanages.

RICHARD B. MCKENZIE

WHEN Newt Gingrich set off a short-lived controversy in late 1994 with his off-the-cuff remarks about orphanages, Hillary Rodham Clinton denounced proposals to bring them back as "unbelievable and absurd." That seemed to be the prevailing reaction. But the tens of thousands of Americans who grew up in orphanages, like me, know better.

We realize, of course, that our orphanages were imperfect. They often lacked some amenities, not least the daily hugs taken for granted by children who grow up in loving families. Orphanages didn't always have the sorts of caring and responsible surrogate parents who would play with the children in the evenings or who "dressed up in sheets and told ghost stories," as Mrs. Clinton recalls about the parents in her neighborhood.

But we also know that the orphanages provided a better environment than the deplorable family circumstances from which so many of the children had

Mr. McKenzie is the Walter B. Gerken Professor of Enterprise and Society in the Graduate School of Management at the University of California, Irvine. He is also the author of The Home: A Memoir of Growing Up in an Orphanage (Basic Books).

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come, and to which so many children today are condemned for the duration of their childhoods. Children in orphanages did not always get affection—though they get more of it than outsiders think—but at least they got supervision. In fact, orphanages resemble nothing so much as the "villages" that Mrs. Clinton has said are "visible extensions" of families and indispensable to the raising of children.

Many orphanages, such as one where I lived, were like villages.

Many orphanages, such as one where I lived, were like villages, first of all, in their partial isolation. We called our orphanage "The Home" with capital letters to indicate that it was, in some ways, self-contained, set apart from the world. The Home was located in rural North Carolina, five miles from the nearest town. Seen from the highway that runs through it, it could easily have been mistaken for a small college. More than 250 boys and girls, ages two to eighteen, resided at Barium Springs Home for Children when I went there at the age of ten in the early 1950s.

Like so many orphanages portrayed in films, ours had several large, turn-of-the-century cottages, each housing twenty to thirty young children, many of whom went to bed on unheated sleeping porches. Unlike the orphanages in *Annie*, *Oliver Twist*, or *Boys Town*, however, we also had cottages of boarding-school quality for older children, with two kids to a room and sixteen to a cottage. These cottages each had a living room and a television room (as well as a small apartment for the housemother). Meals were served in the main dining hall, which was the center of the village both geographically and socially.

The Home's 1,500 acres included a vast tract of unspoiled woods where we spent much of our free time exploring, building forts, damming streams, and taming pets. But there were also many acres of pasture for the sixty milking cows, two hundred beef cattle, hundred sheep, hundred hogs, and five hundred laying hens we tended. There were hundreds of acres of hay fields, vegetable gardens, and orchards. Along with hired hands, the children of The Home worked extensively—for up to fifty unpaid hours a week during the summers and twenty during the school year.

At The Home, we were constantly made aware that work was important, not only to put food on the table and to keep the cost of our care in line, but also because work is good for the soul. The work we have done since our days at The Home has, for most of us, seemed easy by comparison.

Like so many villages of the 1950s and before, we had our own slaughtering plant, print shop, cannery, carpenter and plumbing shops, and chicken coops. For most of the 1950s, we had our own on-campus elementary and high schools (which were better than the schools in the surrounding county). Our varsity teams played against city schools that had twenty times the number of students, but we won more often than not. We had our own swimming pool, tennis courts, football field, and horseshoe pits. We even had our own village church and gymnasium, the latter being used for basketball games, roller-skating, and dances.

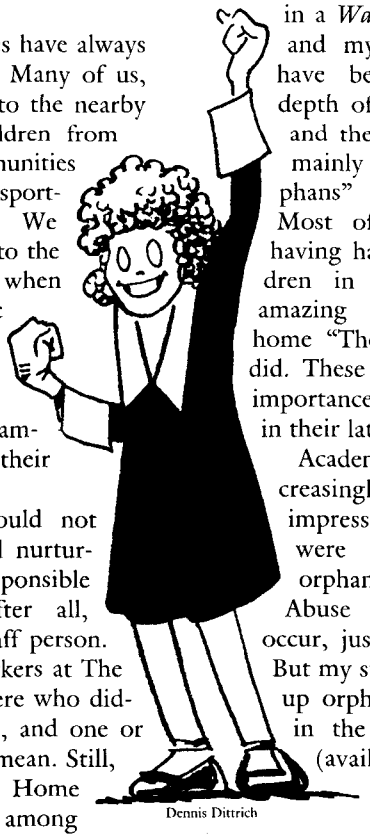
Our campus was a place set apart, and some of us had problems adjusting to the "real world" on our departure. But our difficulties probably were much like those faced by other kids from isolated farms and communities when they moved to large cities.

The critics of orphanages have always exaggerated our isolation. Many of us, especially the boys, went to the nearby towns on weekends. Children from the surrounding communities came to our school, and to sporting events and dances. We became more integrated into the surrounding communities when we started going to public schools in the late 1950s. We dated girls and boys from other communities. They visited us on the campus, and we went to their homes.

Clearly, The Home could not provide the individualized nurturing that loving and responsible families can provide—after all, there were 12 kids per staff person. There also were some workers at The Home during my time there who didn't live up to their duties, and one or two who were downright mean. Still, many of the kids at The Home found worthy mentors among staff members who considered their work more a mission than a profession (most were highly religious, and few had formal training in child care). Mr. J. B. Johnson, like Father Flanigan in *Boys Town*, knew the name of every child during his tenure as head of The Home and was renowned for taking groups of children for nature walks on Sunday afternoons. And there is not a child who went through The Home from the 1930s through the 1970s who doesn't fondly remember Miss Rebecca Carpenter, the case worker, who always had a bright smile and a word of encouragement. She never married, but she mothered hundreds.

My last housemother at The Home sent me a birthday card every year after I left until her death in the late 1980s—for nearly thirty years! Critics of orphanages couldn't possibly appreciate what it meant to me when at Christmas two years ago I received a two-foot-by-three-foot set of framed original verses on what it means to be successful, written and needlepointed by my seventh-grade teacher. She wanted to remind me, one more time, that "success" ultimately is not defined by money and position but by what is in the heart and soul.

My experience has not been all that unusual. I know that from the reaction to my previous writings on orphanages, in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed and my book *The Home*. I have been stunned by the depth of emotion the column and the book have unloosed, mainly from "successful orphans" around the country. Most of them confessed to having had a great life as children in orphanages, and an amazing number called their home "The Home," just as we did. These orphans attest to the importance their upbringing had in their later success.


Dennis Dittrich

Academic historians are increasingly corroborating our impressions. No doubt, there were some pretty bad orphanages in days gone by. Abuse in several forms did occur, just as in other villages. But my survey of 1,600 grown-up orphans from nine homes in the South and Midwest (available in full in the April 1997 *Child and Youth Care Forum*)

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suggests that, by and large, the orphanages did right by their charges. The alumni I surveyed are white, now 45 or older, and stayed in orphanages for an average of nine years. They have a 17 per cent higher rate of high-school graduation than their counterparts in the general white population and a 39 per cent higher rate of college graduation. They also have 20 per cent more master's degrees, 250 per cent more professional degrees, and 17 per cent more doctorates.

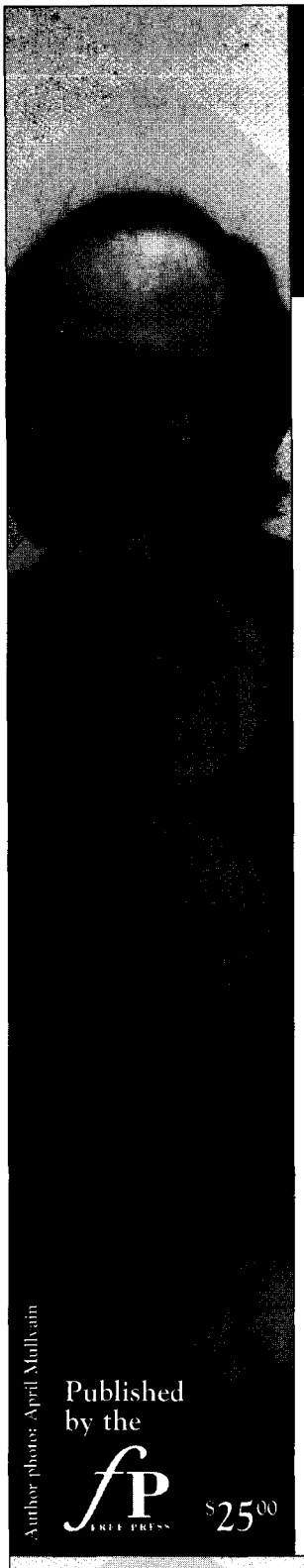
And while they have a higher divorce rate (44 per cent versus 30 per cent for their age group), they report being far happier and have far fewer emotional problems than other Americans. At the time of my survey, only 29 per cent of Americans polled by the National Opinion Research Center said they were "very happy." More than twice that percentage of orphans said they were "very happy." And while 12 per cent of all Americans said they were "not too happy," less than half that percentage of the orphans felt the same way.

The median household incomes of the middle-aged and older orphans were 10 to 61 per cent higher (depending on age group) than the median for their counterparts in the general white population. Moreover, the orphans' rates of unemployment, poverty, incarceration, and dependence on public assistance were minor fractions of the rates for other white Americans.

Conventional wisdom has it that orphans are always pining to be adopted. Few orphans in my survey reported ever wanting to be adopted while at their orphanages, and upwards of 90 per cent preferred their orphanage care to foster care. Close to 90 per cent of the orphans assessed their homes favorably, and only 2 per cent have "unfavorable" or "very unfavorable" assessments.

The survey has limitations. The more successful and happier orphans may have been more inclined to respond. However, all the respondents had spent a substantial amount of time in an orphanage and had gone to their orphanages from bad family circumstances. If the concept of orphanages were truly "unbelievable and absurd," the alumni should not have done as well as they have.

Still, why *have* the orphans done so well? The most obvious answer: these orphanages did not live down to the dreadful stereotypes. Almost all were a functioning part of larger religious or charitable communities that had a stake


Author photo: April Mullkain

FROM THE AUTHOR OF RADICAL SON

THE POLITICS OF BAD FAITH

THE RADICAL ASSAULT ON AMERICA'S FUTURE

BY DAVID HOROWITZ

This elegant, insightful work ought to be widely read as a necessary corrective to the most dangerous moral disease of our times.
—Robert Bork

David Horowitz, like his biblical namesake, is both a poet and a warrior for what is right.
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A series of essays that lay bare with surgical precision the ways in which American radical intellectuals have managed to disguise themselves as liberals and to marginalize the ideas of genuine liberals. Written with passion, it makes for fascinating reading.
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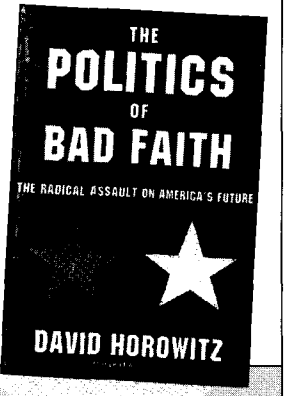

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in the children's success. When asked what they believe to be the advantages of their homes, the orphans point to specific factors either ignored or cited unfavorably by critics: the sense of responsibility, discipline, work ethic, and religious and moral values instilled in them by those institutions.

If the nation had few problems with its current child-welfare system, no one would reconsider bringing back orphanages. But the country's child-care problems are grave and getting worse. Our child-care system is today guided by the ideology of "family preservation." Before taking children from unfit parents, we wait until they have been gravely and repeatedly neglected and abused. Then, after a short respite during which we seem to expect magical reforms, we return the children to be neglected and abused once again.

Far too many disadvantaged children today endure dozens of different foster-care placements before reaching high school. While many foster parents are generous people devoting their lives to the care of disadvantaged children, some treat their foster children as second-class family members and then discard them with the advent of the slightest behavioral problem—or no problem at all. The children of The Home, and a multitude of other homes, knew it was there and would always be there, so long as we needed it. Without that sense of permanence, should we wonder why so many disadvantaged children today wind up in some mental or emotional rehabilitation program or incarcerated as a "child predator"?

Most private homes have closed their doors or shifted their mission to caring only for severely troubled youngsters. But a few homes remain. The Milton Hershey School in Pennsylvania and the Connie Maxwell Home in South Carolina are shining examples of what can still be accomplished for disadvantaged children.

And there are signs that private homes for children are coming back. Consider the introduction of SOS Children's Villages in Florida and Ohio. However, the expansion will be slowed by the considerable annual cost of child-care in homes—which can exceed by a wide margin the cost of a year at Harvard University—and the professional and policy biases against the reintroduction of improved forms of institutional care. Costs can be cut only if the child-care industry is drastically deregulated and the energies of charitable groups freed. (In the early 1950s the average cost of orphanage care with schooling included was about $7,000 a year—in 1998 dollars!)

Changing attitudes will be tougher. We need to recognize that many children would be better off in a permanent care environment than in foster care, and that the safety and well-being of children must trump the goal of "family preservation." Beyond that, we need to rethink laws that now prevent homes for children from asking their charges to mow the grass, much less do more responsible work, and we need to rethink legal predispositions that discourage substitute caregivers from even hugging the children in their care.

So I hope the First Lady will reconsider. Sometimes, it takes an orphanage to raise a child. □

MADD House

Is Mothers Against Drunk Driving out of control?

ERIC PETERS

MOTHERS Against Drunk Driving was founded in 1980 by Candy Lightner after a drunken man who had multiple convictions for driving while intoxicated ran down and killed her 13-year-old daughter. MADD quickly helped make drunk driving one of the most heavily combatted social scourges in the nation. But now the group has embarked on a crusade that has even former adherents wondering whether it has gone too far.

Mrs. Lightner herself has quit MADD because she thinks it has become "overzealous." The group is now devoting its energies to putting pressure on state legislatures around the country to lower the permissible Blood Alcohol Content for drivers from .10 to .08. Such a change would not increase safety on the roads, but it would increase the number of supposedly "drunk" drivers—and, hence, the perceived need for MADD. It is a typical story of a well-intentioned lobbying group becoming a self-perpetuating Washington institution.

MADD argues that even "at .08 BAC, a driver is 16 times more likely to be involved in a crash" than if he had consumed no alcohol at all. MADD President Karolyn Nunnallee contends that "many people are dangerously impaired at even .05 BAC" (about the level most people would have after one beer on an empty stomach). MADD recently sought to have Congress force the .08 standard on all the states—sixteen already have it—by incorporating language into the recently passed Transportation Bill that would have tied distribution of federal highway dollars to adoption of .08 BAC. The provision was killed at the last minute.

Should it have been? Dr. H. Laurence Ross, a professor at the University of New Mexico and author of *Confronting Drunk Driving*, points out that "the potential of alcohol to impair drivers and cause accidents is directly proportionate to the amount consumed." According to Dr. Ross, adoption of the .08 standard has the potential to increase by 60 per cent the number of motorists arrested for "drunk driving"—but without any concomitant decrease in either fatality or accident rates.

Accident statistics show that impairment of driving ability seldom takes place until BAC levels exceed .10. A BAC of .08 or less means there is little enough alcohol in his or her system that it is extremely unlikely to appreciably affect coordination, reaction times, vision, or judgment in a normal person. The man who killed Candy Lightner's daughter had a BAC of .20—and most of the weaving drunks pulled over by cops have BAC levels above .10.

The evidence confirms this at every turn:

Mr. Peters is a nationally syndicated automotive columnist; he may be reached at EPeters952@aol.com on the Internet.

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—In 1996, more than 62 per cent of all traffic fatalities considered to be "alcohol-related" were the work of drivers with BAC levels above .14—almost twice the .08 level.

—According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, fatality rates don't go up appreciably until you get above .10 BAC.

—A study by the Harvard Injury Control Center found that 67 per cent of those drivers who were killed in automobile accidents after drinking had BAC levels of .15 or higher.

—Fewer deaths occur in accidents involving drivers with BACs between .08 and .09 than involving those with BACs between .01 and .03, which is cough-syrup territory.

"MADD's number-one priority is to lower the arrest threshold for DWI to .08—even though this level makes it illegal for a 120-pound woman to drive after consuming just two glasses of wine over the course of two hours," says Rick Berman of the Alcohol Beverage Institute, the lobbying arm of the liquor industry, which played a critical role in stripping the .08 language from the Transportation Bill.

As Michael Fumento, a veteran writer on scientific subjects, puts it, "Even advocates of the .08 BAC limit admit that drivers below the .10 level rarely drive erratically; hence the only way to catch them is by putting up more police roadblocks and doing more random breath testing." Apart from harassing innocent drivers who have had a glass of wine or two over dinner, this has the pernicious side effect of diverting police away from patrolling the highways, where they might spot and pull over genuinely dangerous drunks, Fumento argues.

BUT MADD marches on, arguing that drunk drivers are responsible for 40 to 50 per cent of all highway fatalities. In this, MADD operates in collusion with the NHTSA, which misleadingly defines as "alcohol-related" *all* traffic fatalities where *any* trace level of alcohol—no matter how small—is discovered in the bloodstream of any person involved in the accident, *even if it's not the driver*.

The NHTSA is working hard in the campaign to lower BAC standards, even if it means playing fast and loose with the evidence. James Fell, the NHTSA's chief of research and evaluation at the time, testified in January before a committee of the Minnesota House that was considering legislation to lower Minnesota's threshold for drunk-driving arrests from .10 to .08 BAC. Fell claimed that the state of California had experienced a 12 per cent reduction in alcohol-related fatalities after it adopted the .08 BAC threshold.

But it turns out that that figure was a *prediction* made by a consultant in favor of the .08 limit. In fact, following the implementation of the .08 BAC threshold, California's alcohol-related deaths declined 6.1 per cent—slightly less than the country-wide decline of 6.3 per cent over that same period.

One definite effect of lowering the standard, as Dr. Ross points out, would be more arrests. For MADD, that would justify more lobbying, more contributions, more PR campaigns, more business for itself. "Like any successful firm," says Rick Berman, "MADD has recognized an iron rule: Revenue must exceed expenses. The tale of the tape is unmistakable." Indeed, MADD enjoyed a cash flow of $45.5 million in 1994. It has become one of the most powerful, well-funded, and omnipresent lobbying groups in the country.

For this success to continue, the battle against drunk driving can never appear to be won. And the need for new laws can never seem to be sated. Candy Lightner puts it mildly: "I worry that the movement I helped create has lost direction." □

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Silence Treatment

Want to experience intimidation on the job? Just speak out against preferences.

WILLIAM MELLOR

BACK in the 1930s and 1940s, the NAACP found it difficult to enlist black teachers to serve as plaintiffs in its salary-equalization suits because the teachers were likely to get fired. In 1955, the head of the Dallas County White Citizens Council reported that the council had prompted the firing of 16 out of 29 blacks who had petitioned the city board of education in Selma, urging school integration. Today these methods of intimidation are back, but in the service of a dramatically different cause.

Edward Blum, Larry Elder, and John Carlson are thoughtful, principled men joined by two things: 1) they all believe that people should be judged as individuals, not by their race; 2) they all personally suffered on the job for taking that position. Their employers bowed to strong-arm tactics of preference advocates designed to stifle their employees' free expression. The experiences of these three men demonstrate how powerful political correctness still is, and how susceptible corporate America is to intimidation on racial matters.

Blum is chairman of the Campaign for a Color-Blind America, an organization that challenges race-based public policies. Since 1993, the Campaign has been on the winning side of lawsuits challenging racially gerrymandered voting districts and race-based admission policies in public colleges. Most recently, it ran the campaign for "Proposition A," a ballot initiative that sought to ban Houston's use of race preferences.

Blum's advocacy so upset then-mayor Bob Lanier that Lanier reportedly called Blum's bosses at Paine Webber and threatened to discontinue the firm's contracts to underwrite city bonds. Expansively interpreting its corporate policy requiring employees to submit any investment-related articles for official approval before publication, the firm demanded that Blum cease his public statements against preferences.

In a written reprimand, Paine Webber told Blum his work outside the firm created an "adverse perception of the firm, resulting in the firm's loss of certain municipal underwriting business. . . . You are advised that the firm will not clear for publication articles or other press contacts in which you espouse an anti-affirmative action position. . . . Any further violations of the firm's corporate communications policy, or any other firm policies, will result in your immediate termination from the firm."

Rather than submit, Blum left Paine Webber and joined an investment firm that permits him to continue his work against preferences. He got more good news on June 26, 1998, when District Judge Sharolyn Wood invalidated the results of the Houston referendum, ordering a new election. Over the objections of the measure's sponsors, the mayor and city council had reworded the initiative so as to cast it in the most negative light possible. The court's decision requires Houston to hold another election using Proposition A's original language, which Blum crafted.

WHEN Larry Elder's radio talk show on KABC-AM in Los Angeles was cut in half from its usual four hours, a secret group called "Talking Drum," which threatened a boycott against Elder's sponsors, claimed victory. Elder is a champion of free and open discussion—he goes out of his way to invite on the air people who disagree with his opposition to preferences. But as the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* wrote in a recent cover story on Elder, "This vigorous intellectual voice, buffed for verbal combat, cannot seem to find a worthy opponent. His enemies do not want to play."

Members of the civil-rights elite and representatives from "Talking Drum" continue to avoid him rather than engaging in public discourse on issues of race. However, thanks to his popularity among listeners, Elder eventually prevailed. Not only did he regain his full time slot, but his show will soon be nationally syndicated.

John Carlson can sympathize. As chairman of Washington State's "Initiative 200" campaign, Carlson got more than 280,000 Washington residents to sign petitions supporting this anti-preference measure. Like Elder, Carlson actively sought out his opponents and gave them air time during his radio program, which Seattle's KVI-AM had carried for more than five years. When I-200 opponents gathered outside his studio for a Martin Luther King Day rally, he invited their leaders in to talk.

Faced with polls showing more than 60 per cent of Washington voters supporting I-200, preference advocates weren't so open-minded. Applying the same techniques that had been used against Elder and Blum, they undertook a campaign of misinformation—centered on a confusing alternative initiative—because, as Edsonya Charles, treasurer of "No 200," admitted, "Confusion helps us and hurts the supporters of I-200."

After initially giving Carlson the green light to head the initiative drive—the third time he had led an initiative campaign since joining KVI in July 1993—station executives in December ordered him to stop talking about it. And in February, KVI fired him because he disobeyed the earlier order and continued talking about I-200—a hot topic not only for his listeners, but for all media in the state. The following weekend, KVI erased from its website the hundreds of e-mails expressing outrage at Carlson's dismissal.

Rather than submit, Blum left Paine Webber.

As of June, however, John Carlson is back, this time in cyberspace. On www.talkspot.com, Carlson now takes e-mails rather than phone calls. And he continues to support I-200. As he says, "My departure from KVI does not shrink this debate [on preferences]. It expands this debate. And the more it's debated, the better." If only supporters of preferences felt the same way. □

Mr. Mellor is president and general counsel for the Institute for Justice, based in Washington, D.C.

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U.S. v. CLINTON

What follows is taken from a speech given by WFB at Kent State University on April 1. In the light of what has since happened, and what looms as United States *v.* Clinton, *we reproduce (without editing) the body of the talk on the then-developing case of Bill Clinton and Paula Jones and Monica Lewinsky. The article is followed by commentary by David Gelernter of Yale; Peter Robinson of the Hoover Institution; James J. Kilpatrick, columnist and author; George McGovern, Democratic candidate for President in 1972; and Lance Morrow, author of* Time *Magazine's 1992 Man of the Year essay on: Bill Clinton.*

WM. F. BUCKLEY JR.

I AM impelled tonight to ruminate on the overriding phenomenon of recent months, which is of course the crisis of President Clinton.

It is overwhelming in its demand for attention. At the most dramatic personal level it asks, Should the President, if allegations are substantiated, resign? At the most dramatic plebiscitary level, it asks, What in the way of behavior does the American public, in the year of Our Lord 1998, expect of its President? And in between, questions arise concerning morality, public and private. We wonder about political implications, the role of special prosecutors, the application of justice at presidential levels, and maybe even the insufficiencies of the Constitution.

I have endeavored to formulate a few propositions. Their purpose is to clarify my own thinking on these questions and, I hope, to engage your interest.

MY first proposition is that *the Paula Jones affair should have been aborted.*

As we know, all nine members of the Supreme Court ruled a year ago that the suit brought against the President by Mrs. Jones should stay on the court calendar. The offense complained of had been committed before the defendant became President of the United States, so that no special immunity attached to him. Moreover, there was no reason to assume—the court argued—that Mr. Clinton could not simultaneously defend himself at trial and conduct the nation's business. It was suggested in effect that if it happened that the trial were to fall on the very same day as a projected bombing of Iraq, the trial judge could reasonably be expected to put off the proceedings for a week or two.

There is a sense in which this lawsuit crept up on the American public substantially unnoticed, rather like the computers that are destined to crash at midnight of the New Year's Eve that brings on the next millennium. On the computer front, we simply assume, or at least I do, that the wizards of Silicon Valley will find the right plug to pull at some point before midnight, and the cyberworld will continue to hum. Something—it was generally thought, until the appearance of Miss Lewinsky—would happen and Paula Jones would go away, and Mr. Clinton would continue on through his term.

The American public was less than shaken by the implications of the case. But there was a certain consternation in the international diplomatic community. There are people out there who think it would be distracting to meet with the President the day before or the day after his exposition of his private parts to a jury to test the credibility of the plaintiff Jones.

I proposed three years ago in my newspaper column that Republican and Democratic leaders agree for the sake of the public tranquillity to view Paula Jones's challenge as a bipartisan problem. Back then, Mrs. Jones was asking for damages of $700,000 and an apology from the President.

Not inconceivably, her lawyers might have persuaded their client to forgo the apology and pocket the cash. There is, after all, always a chance, in a jury trial, of losing. It is hardly inconceivable that at least one juror, in a trial of *Jones* v. *Clinton*, would express the same blind affinity for the Presidency that 12 jurors expressed for Afro Americans when they voted that O. J. Simpson was guiltless. One of the jurors (or several, or all) might have decided that whatever the manifest guilt of the President, that juror was not going to participate in a process that would humiliate the Chief Executive of the world's only superpower.

If Mrs. Jones had persisted in her demand for an apology, we'd have needed to see a display of diplomacy in Mr. Clinton. Even if he were entirely innocent, he might have been counseled to go ahead and accept the release of an apology written as if he might have been guilty.

Every day, people in commerce sign consent decrees in which they acknowledge the hypothetical possibility of guilt even when absolutely convinced of their guiltlessness. Mr. Clinton could have reasoned that his concern for presidential decorum outweighed any appearance he might permit of hypothetical guilt. He could have said, "Whatever I did that gave offense to Mrs. Jones, I regret."

That and $700,000 could have rescued us all from the lengthy trough ahead. And of course the question is left with us now, Was the failure to settle, back then, an early warning sign of defective presidential leadership? Our Chief Executive is also our First Politician. Expert politicians are expected to avoid unnecessary crises.

MY next proposition is that *we are being encouraged to conclude that whatever went on in the Oval Office and thereabouts doesn't really matter.*

It can certainly be argued that that's the way the world is, at the turn of the century. In England before the last

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election Alan Clark was nominated by the Conservative Party to run for a safe seat in the House of Commons. He was asked by one member of the Conservative Party's selection committee, Were there any skeletons in his closet? His answer: "Whole graveyardsful."

Mr. Clark was not just one more British eccentric, putting on airs. He wrote in his *published* diaries that he had had many affairs even while married. According to his own book, he seduced not only the wife of a judge who was a close friend, but also her two daughters. Is the apparent indifference to such behavior (Mr. Clark was elected) distinctively British?

By way of contrast, one recalls that 30 per cent of registered Democrats told the pollsters in 1992, before the famous New Hampshire primary, that if it were established that candidate Clinton had in fact committed adultery, they would not vote for him. True, along came Gennifer Flowers, who said she had had sexual relations with him over a considerable period, and that she had taped phone calls to prove it. But all that blew away. What is the difference between Gennifer Flowers and Paula Jones?

That Paula Jones said no? The girl who says yes and the girl who says no are obviously different women. But it is the same man in both cases. Do we judge him differently?

Consider the public attitudes toward Pamela Harriman, U.S. ambassador to France, who died with her boots on a year ago in Paris and was heavily and ceremoniously mourned in Paris and in Washington.

The Harriman phenomenon was simply too much for the editors of *The Economist*. Their eulogy was in the form of an editorial, which described an imaginary dining-room table presided over by Ambassador Harriman, in the company of a dozen of her known lovers. What, *The Economist* wondered, might Mrs. Harriman, looking about the table, have asked of her guests, that they couldn't provide her with?

The first man, sitting at her right, was, to be sure, also her first husband, "the drunken Randolph Churchill." Well, he might have juiced up the party by bringing along his father, Winston Churchill, *The Economist* suggested.

> The airwaves would have been vibrant enough: Bill Paley of CBS owned a lot of them; Ed Murrow, America's greatest wartime correspondent, was their master. Fine wine at dinner? Elie de Rothschild, owner of Château Lafite, would see to that. Nice pictures on the wall? . . . Carter Brown, director of Washington's National Gallery, could help out.
>
> Want to go racing tomorrow? Aly Khan, the Aga's heir, would give you a tip. Something soapy after dinner? Step forward, Frank Sinatra. . . . If you wanted to leave in a hurry, Gianni Agnelli, who owned Fiat, could provide fast wheels. A more sedate exit? How about one of Stavros Niarchos's yachts?

Pamela Harriman was a great pillar of the Democratic Party. Was her own conduct, which did not deprive her of social or political standing, a clue to a massive movement in public toleration, from which we get a perspective on the Clinton case?

MY next proposition is that *some Americans appear to be saying that public servants should be expected to be—casual—in the matter of conjugal license*.

The editorial writer of the *Orlando Sentinel* recently expressed his views on the subject. "In our hearts, most of us know that few (if any) among us could pass such scrutiny [as Bill Clinton is being subjected to]. . . . But the success of our system is based on its ability to recruit normal people for extraordinary service. If we exclude the normal, we invite the extreme."

The paper went on to urge, beginning with the next presidential inauguration, the following reform, patterned on the marriage ceremony. At weddings, the editor reminds us, the following words are spoken: "Let all those who oppose this union speak now or forever hold their peace." The editor proposes a law that would grant "blanket immunity" from criminal or civil prosecution to the President and to every officeholder who is in the line of succession to the President under the Constitution.

Very interesting. What *is* a normal person? It isn't safe to assume that the Orlando paper thinks entirely "normal" a man who has dropped his pants—literally—in front of a subordinate, as an invitation to dalliance. A distinction appears to be asserting itself on the matter of sexual promiscuity. Once again, if the lady says yes, then we can let the episode pass by. Gennifer Flowers not only said yes, but said yes enthusiastically, by her account. Paula Jones said no. What is it that taints the man who elicits a negative response from the woman he seeks out? Bad judgment? A lack of planning? If Paula Jones had said yes, then—in the Flowers tradition—there would have been no plaintiff. The Orlando paper seems to be saying

Gennifer Flowers, Monica Lewinsky, Bill Clinton, and Susan McDougal by Roman Genn

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that every "normal" man has attempted seduction and that it is to be expected that sometimes the suitor—who may be the President-elect—will be spurned.

On the other hand, is it really correct to assume that we must expect to recruit only "normal" people to high office? At the beginning of the 1952 campaign, Mrs. Robert Taft, whose husband was then Senate Majority Leader and a hot presidential prospect, was asked at a large luncheon whether her husband was—a common man. Mrs. Taft's reply froze the blood of the political pro, seated alongside, who had induced her to make her first public appearance. Mrs. Taft, a very shy woman, said rather haltingly to the large assembly that her husband was not a common man. "No," she said. "Bob was first in his class at Yale and first in his class at the Harvard Law School."

It is recorded that she stopped, and shook her head slightly before concluding, "I don't think it would be right to send a common man to Washington to represent the people of Ohio." To the surprise of the professionals, the audience broke into amused and boisterously acquiescent applause. Mrs. Taft's reply may sound elitist. On the other hand, we have had only 42 of them, and it would be nice to think that Presidents should be men of abnormal qualifications.

On the general point of public attitudes, we note that the current issue of *Playboy* carries an editorial by founder-philosopher-rake Hugh Hefner, who joyfully welcomes Bill Clinton into the fraternity of the enlightened. "President Clinton," he writes, "has become sort of a sexual Rorschach. I have been in a similar position for more than forty years. As I said in a Playboy Interview 24 years ago, I enjoy the public's fantasies about my life almost as much as I do the way I really live. And I can't deny being amused at the mixed reactions I arouse."

And the founder of the Playboy Philosophy concludes happily, "The sexually charged atmosphere of the White House has lit a thousand points of lust—around watercoolers, on the Internet, in bedrooms, on telephones—and a thousand points of tolerance." And the pilgrimages begin. A story in this morning's *New York Times* leads off: "Bob Packwood is out to test a theory: If President Clinton can survive—even thrive under—an avalanche of sex-related accusations, then maybe the political climate has changed enough for [former Senator] Packwood who "resigned in disgrace three years ago over accusations of sexual misconduct and efforts to cover them up" to seek redemption" by running again for public office.

MY next proposition is that, granted that the whole thing should have been made to disappear, granted that what happened doesn't affect his professional conduct, granted that everybody acts that way and everybody should more or less be expected to act that way—still, *Mr. Clinton's Administration has made the public learning process difficult*.

In the past fortnight what has been most frequently brought up is the difference between Mr. Clinton's first statement concerning Mrs. Willey—that he had no recollection of a meeting with her in the Oval Office—and his subsequent statement—that he clearly recalled that meeting, at which he had expressed his sympathy with her but only by kissing her on the forehead, as, to quote him, he had "done so frequently, both with women and with men."

Men and indeed women who are close to the President have hoped for, as his own press secretary, Mr. McCurry, confessed at one point, something more straightforward from him to illuminate the mysteries with which we are left to cope.

It is a difficulty which his closest associate, Vice President Gore, seems also to suffer from. Your friendly family lawyer will advise you that what Mr. Gore did last spring

Some Americans appear to be saying that public servants should be expected to be—casual—in the matter of conjugal license.

when accosted with his fundraising meeting at the Buddhist temple in California was "to plead in the alternative." Here is how pleading in the alternative goes: 1) My client didn't do it. 2) If my client did it, it was legal. 3) Even though it wasn't legal, it should have been. And 4), my client won't do it again.

Those who exposed themselves to the White House press conference a year ago at which Mr. Clinton explained the financial devices used in 1996, including 938 guests in the Lincoln bedroom, wept for Occam's razor, the old principle that you should never multiply explanations, but should opt rather for the simplest and most obvious of them. The President's grand view of the whole operation was really as simple as that the Republicans spent more money than the Democrats and therefore the "people" had to have a chance to "hear" the "competitive" views of the Administration, and therefore it was necessary to turn the White House into a theme park. But—he interspersed—it was a theme park in which all the rides were in fact legal, and those tiny little brushes of problematic legality are things which will never happen again, now that he knows what they are, but all he can say now, which is what really counts, is that the people involved are fine, honorable people.

They are to be distinguished from the "vast right-wing conspiracy" which, Mrs. Clinton now contributes to the narrative, is responsible for attempting to discredit the President.

A conspiracy is "an agreement to perform together an illegal, wrongful, or subversive act." There has certainly been activity by some right-wingers of a disreputable kind, including the so-called documentary which attempts to prove that Vincent Foster did not commit suicide.

On such matters a little perspective is in order. There is always an irresponsible right wing and there is always an irresponsible left wing. Right-wing extremism flourished in the late Fifties and Sixties under the banner of the John Birch Society, whose founder convinced himself, and a few others, that Dwight Eisenhower was an agent of the Soviet Union and that Chief Justice Earl Warren was his primary agent. There isn't much evidence that the John Birch "conspiracy" bore fruit. Every call by the John Birch Society to impeach Earl Warren enhanced his prestige.

The extremist Left was rather more mischievous in its

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effects on history, since its adherents, the Communists, stole atomic secrets, among other things.

The kooks go on. There are the wild militiamen of the Right in Idaho and elsewhere. And, from the Left, every now and again we hear such things as that Wall Street is planning another depression, the Pentagon another war, or that AIDS was an invention of the CIA to arrest the growth of the black population.

And it is wrong to deny that certain satisfactions—even pleasures—are taken from adversities that afflict our disagreeable neighbor, our unspeakable cousin, the college against which our college traditionally contends, the other political party.

Sometimes this human weakness goes as far as *Schadenfreude*, the noted furtive and not-so-furtive pleasure that people can get from the miseries of others. This is human nature. Suppose that a fairy with the proverbial magic wand had volunteered early in June 1972 to waft down upon the Oval Office just when President Nixon was about to give orders to call off the FBI, on the grounds that Watergate was a CIA-related affair. *Pffft*!! The smoking gun would have been undischarged!! Richard Nixon would never have uttered his fateful, mortal words, words which his tape machine would spit out in July 1974, ejecting him from the White House.

Would the American Left have been pleased that this subversive latency in American history had been aborted? Let's face it, no. What the Left most wanted was to discredit Nixon and get rid of him. If the same magic lady were to appear tomorrow and offer to restore Miss Lewinsky's virginity, do we suppose that the right wing would be happy about it? One more virgin, in exchange for the exposure of a defective Democratic President?

So grant that some of the ill will is entrenched and opportunistic. Does this suggest the disqualification of the special prosecutor because he is known to be a conservative? It matters a great deal that the special prosecutor should not engage in improprieties. Some people suggest that he has done so. I can't myself imagine what business he has checking the book accounts of Miss Lewinsky, but perhaps there is a reason. There are different procedures appropriate to the Internal Revenue agent who has reason to believe that John Jones had a million dollars of unreported income, and the Internal Revenue agent who is told to target John Jones and find *something*—anything—he has done wrong, no matter what.

We are left to wait until the charges against Mr. Starr are drawn up, to pass judgment then on whether they are persuasive.

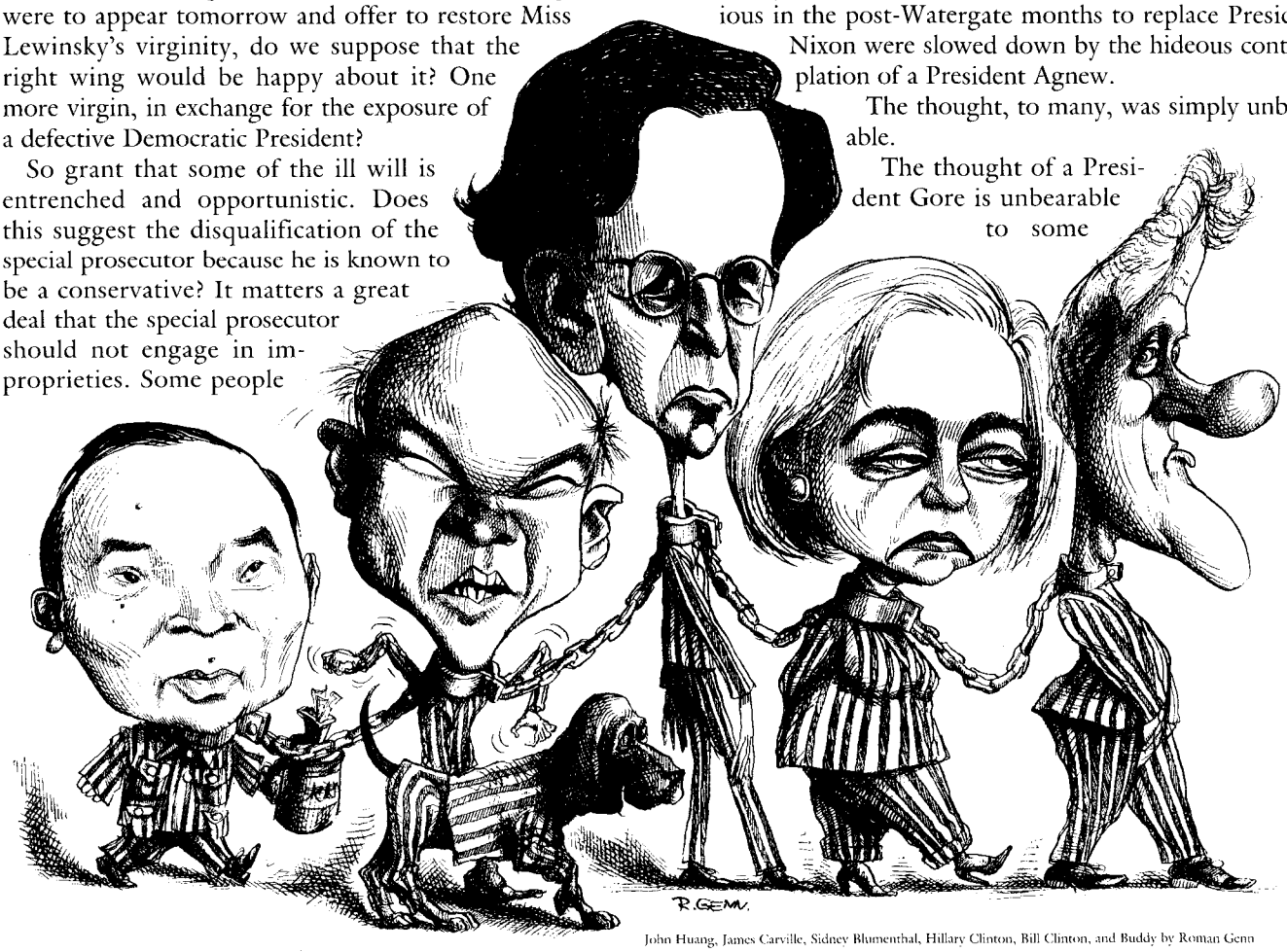
The lack of clarity in the matters under dispute is an enemy to public understanding. It would be fine to hear from Mr. Clinton some direct language. He might have said, sometime in the past three months, "I have never engaged in activity with Miss Lewinsky that I would wish to conceal from anyone. My staff is preparing a description of what she did during her 37 visits to the Oval Office." The lawyers can keep him from saying it, but they can't keep the American public from panting to hear it. Or can they?

MY next proposition is that, *in the political arena, whatever the concerns for morality and integrity, the political consideration inevitably figures.*

A factor working for Mr. Clinton is, What if? The thought, What if? crossed quite a few prosecutorial minds in Washington before October 1973—when Spiro Agnew suddenly resigned as Vice President. Many who were anxious in the post-Watergate months to replace President Nixon were slowed down by the hideous contemplation of a President Agnew.

The thought, to many, was simply unbearable.

The thought of a President Gore is unbearable to some



John Huang, James Carville, Sidney Blumenthal, Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, and Buddy by Roman Genn

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Republicans of upwardly mobile ambitions. The nightmare for them is a race, not against Vice President Gore, nominee of his party to succeed Mr. Clinton, but against President Gore, in residence in the White House ever since 1998, when Clinton stepped down. Some Republican odds-makers see that as a much tougher race than a contest against candidate Gore, with the blameless private life, while lame-duck President Clinton was still in the White House, a Democrat whose private life cannot be discussed in the presence of children.

MY final proposition on the matter is that *America should be proud of its capacity to forgive but aware also that forgiveness is a joint exercise*.

Forgiveness presupposes contrition. On the matter of contrition, there is something missing in the pictures we are receiving every day from Africa. There Mr. Clinton apologized for slavery, for which he is not responsible, rather than apologize for other things, for which he is responsible. Of course, there has been no admission of guilt. And bear in mind that whatever the law may say about the obstruction of justice, it is unrealistic to distinguish sharply between the offense of adultery and the offense of lying about it, inasmuch as the second offense goes hand in hand with the first. Anyone who commits adultery is expected to lie about it. Indeed, the point can be made persuasively that it is dishonorable *not* to lie about it. By that reasoning, Mr. Clinton has been absolved—by the sacrament of re-election, from public punishment.

Yet . . . there is something continuingly provocative in Mr. Clinton's personal appearance. He doesn't—ever—appear guilty. His face is apparently unwrinkled by any ravages of regret or mortification. In his State of the Union speech his manner was triumphant, as if he had singlehandedly accomplished the rape of all the Sabine Women. Good old Tricky Dick Nixon never let the public down in these matters. He *always* looked guilty, never more so than when he was facing the public and averring his innocence. His face was a polygraph. Clinton's face is that of the freshly minted altar boy. He is Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray. We have looked at that face through the corrosive mists of Gennifer Flowers, draft evasion, platonic experiences with marijuana, through Vincent Foster, Webster Hubbell, the Lincoln bedroom, John Huang, the FBI files, Mrs. Willey on *60 Minutes*, and what we see is something in the nature of incredulity. For that reason, an apology from him is as inconceivable as a sex change. Bill Clinton couldn't bring it off. The Church made Henry II march over to Canterbury and get himself flogged publicly to atone for the assassination of Becket. Clinton has no comparable recourse, besides which we have the separation of church and state, and he would veto the proposal.

It is always relevant what the moral perspective is in any situation. It is presumptuous to assume that we are keener moral spirits than the men who wrote the Constitution because—unlike them—we do not tolerate slavery. But the key is perspective: in a world in which slavery was commonplace, it is the prophet who cries out against it, not the people, or their institutions. It required a civil war with half a million dead to change those perspectives in America, and even then what mostly changed was the law, not the moral understanding of the obligations of equality.

It is not inconceivable that, at some point ahead, we will be asking ourselves: What is the matter with the general public? Why does it not understand the gravity of what is happening? W. B. Yeats wrote a letter, back in the Thirties, to the Dublin newspaper which had published serial criticisms of the mayor, the most recent of which had asked, "What has the Lord Mayor of Dublin recently done to commend himself to the people of Dublin?" Yeats's letter read, "What have the people of Dublin recently done to commend themselves to the Lord Mayor?"

From time to time it is, perhaps you will agree with me—some of you, anyway—appropriate to wonder about the judgment of the majority.

In any case, the situation leaves us much to think about. How it will evolve, I don't know and probably Kenneth Starr does not know. I do know this, that whatever happens in the year ahead, the questions touched upon in the last three months will be pondered for many years, by historians of course, but also by moralists. There will be those who applaud the presidential behavior. La Rochefoucauld is endlessly relevant. Remember, he wrote that hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue. If you heatedly deny having stolen from the collection plate, we can take satisfaction from your implicit position, which is that it is wrong to steal from the collection plate.

Mr. Clinton can in the sense we speak of be set down as in favor of virtue, even if he didn't inhale it. What the moral tribunals will say of America's behavior during the early months of 1998 is again difficult to predict. Perhaps they will say that America showed a great sophistication in separating private conduct from public conduct. Or they might say that the United States was so waterlogged with good times and good interest rates and no wars to fight that we lost our capacity for moral refinements. □

DAVID GELERNTER

LAST April WFB launched a precision-guided speech that hit some key targets with deadly accuracy. An apology from Bill Clinton, he said, "is as inconceivable as a sex change." However, he pointed out, the public's moral viewpoint is more important than the President's: we may ask in the future, "What is the matter with the general public? Why does it not understand the gravity of what is happening?"

The speech cites Occam's razor, which tells us not to multiply explanations unnecessarily. Occam's is one of the best principles I know (and the very best razor by a long shot), but I am about to multiply explanations anyway. The gap between the public and the pundits on the Lewinsky affair demands it. It seems to me that there are at least three explanations, all growing out of the strange state of modern American culture but nonetheless distinct.

Mr. Gelernter is a columnist for the New York Post.

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First there is the one that WFB mentions: that we have "lost our capacity for moral refinements." When you teach something relentlessly for decades, eventually people learn it. For a generation we have told our children and each other not to be (that stupid word) "judgmental." Hence we are no longer judgmental. Actions have consequences. The *New York Times* (speaking for the cultural establishment) can't understand what happened; the *Times* believes that it can savage high culture for a generation and then cry over the collapsing audience for classical music. Dry your tears and get lost: when you plant turnips, you get turnips.

Bill Clinton is part of a new American culture with its own moral framework, a culture of acting.

But here is another factor. The President's grand-jury testimony, his speech afterward, the affair itself—when you add them up, they taught us nothing and changed nothing, and therefore they amount to nothing. We knew the President's ugly history when we elected him. We knew that, if we were ranking job titles in terms of net capacity to impress girls, "President of the United States" would do pretty well. We knew that the President would have opportunities and would grab them. (At a sheer minimum, we knew enough not to be *surprised* when he grabbed them.) Does anyone believe that Miss Lewinsky was this President's only female toy?

Commentators left and right have accused the President of coarsening public culture, making the network news unfit for children, forcing us to contemplate oral sex (you'd think he had invented it). All these charges strike me as silly. You can't deflower a prostitute. The news has been unfit for children since the 1970s. Was it the President's idea that the news industry should (for example) generate a billion words of blather about a lesbian character on some TV show? No one accused John Kennedy of vulgarizing American culture, because he didn't. Nor did Bill Clinton. It was vulgar when he got to it—and putting oral sex on the network news was the networks' doing, not the President's.

One last explanation: The public doesn't act betrayed because, my guess is, it doesn't feel betrayed. When the President denied having an affair with Miss Lewinsky, it never even occurred to the average American to believe him—any more than it occurred to the President to tell the truth. "Truth" in the conventional sense probably doesn't exist for him. Yet he is not exactly a liar (not on this count), and the public doesn't exactly regard him as one. It regards him as an actor. What it knows and the cultural elite doesn't is that Bill Clinton is part of a new American culture with its own moral framework, a culture of acting. When you are an actor, the "truth" of your performance has nothing to do with your actual life. An actor who plays Hamlet is lying in a sense, because he isn't actually Hamlet. But it's not that we give actors a provisional license to lie; "lying" simply doesn't enter the picture.

Modern American culture is built on acting—choosing a role and stepping into it. (Hence "career" has become a sacred word.) Every culture exacts a certain amount of unnatural behavior, but nowadays we are required not merely to *do* certain things but to believe certain things, wholeheartedly. For example: bigotry is human nature; but where an earlier generation might have forbidden bigoted acts, we also forbid (by order of unanimous public opinion) bigoted talk and even bigoted beliefs. Arguably this is good: a man can portray a better character than he actually is, as Bill Clinton does, and society can benefit. Inarguably it gives society the air of a stage play. We start out young: that men and women are basically different tends to be one of a child's first abstract observations. But the first-grade teacher tells her class, "Remember, a woman can do everything a man can do!" Which is false, just as obviously as the reverse proposition would be—and the children know it and the teacher knows it. But we can't simply dismiss her as a liar. She is playing her part and speaking her lines, as we have told her to.

One of the big differences between the average American and the average pundit is that the pundit (in all likelihood) won't admit his real beliefs even to himself. The average man knows he is acting, and knows Bill Clinton is acting.

One feels that, in his private life, Al Gore is probably a better man than President Clinton—but that he is an actor to exactly the same extent. Bob Dole is no actor. He didn't understand the idea of choosing a role, as opposed to (the old-fashioned approach) living a life. Dole's sheer bewilderment in the face of Bill Clinton and everything he stands for will be remembered alongside the public's indifference to the Lewinsky affair—two of the deepest cultural pronouncements of modern times. □

PETER ROBINSON

"IT is not inconceivable," Mr. Buckley writes, "that, at some point ahead, we will be asking ourselves: What is the matter with the general public? Why does it not understand the gravity of what is happening?"

During this brief, unwholesome lull between President Clinton's testimony to the grand jury and Kenneth Starr's report to Congress, that, surely, is the central conundrum: Why *doesn't* the public understand the gravity of what is happening? The President stood for seven months by a bald-faced lie. "I want you to listen to me," he had said, looking directly into the camera. "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky." When at last the President admitted the truth, he did so grudgingly; his speech lasted all of four minutes and ten seconds, and it consisted of making a confession that was at best incomplete, demanding an end to the investigation, and calling on Americans to "turn away from the spectacle," effectively urging voters to become complicit with him in flouting the law. After the speech, President Clinton's job-approval rating, already high, went *up*.

Understandably infuriated, some conservatives find

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themselves tempted to blame the national predicament in part on the American people themselves. Even Mr. Buckley, while possessed of a remarkable degree of philosophical remove, displays a certain wariness: "From time to time it is, perhaps you will agree with me . . . appropriate to wonder about the judgment of the majority."

Blaming the people is simply mistaken. President Clinton's high job-approval ratings are entirely understandable.

Yet blaming the people is, I believe, simply mistaken. President Clinton's high job-approval ratings are entirely understandable—even, to some extent, commendable. Let me note three reasons why.

A desire to hold onto good times. Good times are *worth* holding onto. Mr. Buckley wonders whether prosperity has had a corrosive effect on voters, lulling them into moral indolence. Have the American people, in his vivid phrase, become "waterlogged with good times"? I see little evidence that they have. Examine any data comparing Americans with Europeans, Asians, and others. You will quickly discover that Americans remain both the most religious and the most productive people on earth. Voters may have been a trifle giddy over the run-up in the stock market. But the giddiness arises from a fact over which conservatives ought to rejoice: about half of American households now own stocks, either directly or through pension funds. That is an unheard-of rate of participation in the equity markets. If voters have been reluctant to roil the markets by rejecting the Chief Executive, they have only been exhibiting a trait that the ownership of property tends to instill: prudence.

The White House agit-prop machine. Conservatives regard James Carville, Harold Ickes, Ann Lewis, Mandy Grunwald, and the rest with vitriol. Vitriol certainly has its place here. But it mustn't blind us to these people's effectiveness.

I worked in the Reagan White House, where I was able to observe the Reagan press operation at close hand and to become acquainted with the press offices of various senators, congressmen, and lobbying groups. The Clinton apologists are in a category apart. They are shrewd, colorful, quotable, relentless. By playing on the respect Americans feel for the Presidency and making use of a legion of sympathizers in the press, they have to a remarkable extent dominated mainstream coverage of the scandal, turning attention from the President's conduct to that of Kenneth Starr. This is lamentable, indeed outrageous. But it isn't the fault of the American people.

The independent counsel. Kenneth Starr possesses a keen legal mind, and he is certainly going about his work with method and diligence, never having complained, except in a couple of dignified, well-argued speeches, about the vilification to which the White House has subjected him. Even so, I wish I could tap him on the head with a wand and make him disappear. The very existence of an independent counsel has deformed the political process.

Contrast the present scandal with Watergate, which of course occurred before the independent-counsel statute was enacted. During Watergate, Congress took the lead in investigating the President, holding hundreds of hours of hearings. The people were able to learn the facts for themselves. They were able to observe their elected officials

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debating the gravity of the President's misdeeds. To be sure, the drama was replete with posturing and hypocrisy. But it was profoundly democratic, permitting, to use another of Mr. Buckley's phrases, a "public learning process."

The present scandal? Kenneth Starr is operating in secret while our elected officials, including even the otherwise rambunctiously partisan Newt Gingrich, are advising one another to avoid serious comment until Mr. Starr files his report. Even today, when talk of censure, impeachment, and resignation are already well advanced, there are only a few facts that are uncontested. Those facts run as follows: Charged with a violation of sexual-harassment law—surely the most suspect and contradictory body of law on the books—President Clinton lied about a matter that had little to do with the conduct of his office and that the judge in any event ruled immaterial, not long before throwing the whole case out of court. If the people believe the case for impeachment as it has so far been presented to them is less than overwhelming, they are perhaps to be forgiven.

When Mr. Starr files his report, then genuine, informed debate can at last begin, and the polls, I believe, will change. They may change slowly—opinion took months to coalesce against Richard Nixon—and the public may still fail to demand Mr. Clinton's removal from office, particularly if Mr. Starr reports only on the Lewinsky matter. But Mr. Clinton's job-approval ratings will go down—an excruciating punishment for a man who has made politics his life—and in the elections this November the Republican majorities in Congress will go up.

I could be wrong. The American people may indeed have grown "waterlogged." But I doubt it. During the last half-century, Americans saw the Cold War through to victory, made room for tens of millions of immigrants, and built the richest, most dynamic economy in the world. It seems unlikely that we would now permit a two-bit liar to corrupt our institutions, or ourselves. □

JAMES J. KILPATRICK

"THE key is perspective," says my brother Buckley. It is a key we should use more often in seeking to unlock hard questions of morality, politics, and law.

I am neither moralist, politician, nor authority on the law, but I lived for 25 years in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, and have lived for the past 9 years in the Holy City of Charleston, S.C. The experience provides a useful perspective on public events. Bill Clinton is a small man. His sins are small potatoes, but they have led to some very bad law.

The question is asked, Is there one law for Presidents and another law for ordinary men? In the context of the Paula Jones case, of course there is, and of course there ought to be. A fundamental principle of our Constitution—the rock-bottom principle of separation of powers—has been jeopardized by the Supreme Court's regrettable ruling a year and a half ago that Mrs. Jones's case against the President could go to trial during his term in office.

Trial *should* have been postponed. It is unthinkable, or so it seems to me, that a sitting President should be subject to the orders of federal judges for acts unrelated to his duties as President. Thomas Jefferson said it all in 1807:

> The leading principle of our Constitution is the independence of the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary of each other, and none are more jealous of this than the Judiciary. But would the Executive be independent of the Judiciary, if he were subject to the *commands* of the latter, and to imprisonment for disobedience: if the several courts could bandy him from pillar to post, keep him constantly trudging from north to south and east to west, and withdraw him entirely from his constitutional duties?

During oral argument, Justice Antonin Scalia made the acerbic point that Mr. Clinton is not so preoccupied with official duties that he can't find time for golf, but Scalia missed the point. The point is power: how it is exercised, how it is abused. Fortunately, with the dismissal of Mrs. Jones's suit on its dubious merits, a showdown has been avoided. Regrettably, though, the Court's 1997 opinion remains on the books. Given the craftiness of lawyers and the litigious nature of the American people, the opinion is likely to encourage trumped-up harassments of future Presidents on down the line.

Let me quote Jefferson again. He remarked in a letter in 1809 that "I never believed there was one code of morality for a public, and another for a private man." True enough, but only to a point. The essence of a "code," whether it deals with moral law or statutory law, lies both in the actions it forbids and in the punishments it imposes. Offenses are matters of degree, and punishments ought to fit the crimes. Maybe we should cut Billy's allowance and take away his keys to the car.

This is where perspective comes in. It is nonsense to suggest, as some of the President's critics are suggesting, that all perjuries are of equal significance. Richard Nixon lied about his official acts as President. Bill Clinton lied about fondling fair Monica. There's a difference.

A whole body of law deals with such distinctions. Perjury involves the offense of answering falsely, under oath, to *material* questions. When viewed in a sensible perspective, Clinton's lies may be seen as clearly immaterial. He has damaged his own reputation, but he has done nothing at all to the institution of the Presidency.

Richard Nixon lied about his official acts as President. Bill Clinton lied about fondling fair Monica. There's a difference.

The charge that Clinton has "obstructed justice" is even flimsier than the charge of perjury. There appears to be no corroborated evidence that he explicitly directed anyone to

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lie under oath. If such a weak case developed on the lower slopes of Olympus, down among the common folk, no rational prosecutor would seek indictment and trial.

Perhaps the Starr report will be so damning that public opinion will reach critical mass, and the President will resign. The prospect strikes me as highly unlikely. If the object is to remove Mr. Clinton, first persuade a majority of the House to impeach the rascal, and then persuade two-thirds of the voting senators to convict him. That prospect strikes me as incredible.

This should be kept in mind: Kenneth Starr will not have failed—not at all—if his grand jury fails to find an impeachable offense. The function of a grand jury is to determine whether there is probable cause to believe that a crime has been committed, and that the accused person committed it. A grand jury that finds no such probable cause does its job in bringing in a finding of "no true bill."

I can add nothing useful to what Bill Buckley has said of politics and morality. The Republicans would be blockheads to push for Clinton's impeachment or resignation. Adultery is certainly immoral, but private acts of immorality have nothing to do with constitutional wrongs.

On the record of his speech of August 17, the President has behaved recklessly. Justice demands appropriate punishment, and Clinton will get it. He will get it every time he looks into the eyes of his daughter and his wife. I would leave it at that. □

George McGovern

I TRUST that it will not be too distressing for Wm. F. Buckley Jr.'s multitude of readers and followers if I should note, as a longtime Democratic liberal, a growing measure of moderation and balance on the part of my conservative friend and sometime debating opponent. His speech of April 1, which escaped my attention at the time, further fortifies my perception of the Buckley mellowing. Or is it possible that unwittingly my liberalism is mellowing and even acquiring a few conservative threads with the accumulation of time and experience—a mellowing that makes the Buckley eloquence and wit more appealing in my later years?

For example, I agree flat out with his first proposition: "The Paula Jones affair should have been aborted." If it had been, as Mr. Buckley points out, we would have been spared the dismal, destructive, and expensive investigation of Monica Lewinsky and presidential sex which over the last seven months has dominated the press and the politics of America.

In my view, the Supreme Court should have set this case aside as the White House requested until the end of Mr. Clinton's labors as our President. It was, after all, a case going back to his days as governor of Arkansas—a case thrown out subsequently by a federal judge as lacking merit and substance.

Mr. McGovern is U.S. Ambassador to the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome. He was a U.S. Senator (D., S.D.) 1963-1981, and the Democratic Nominee for President in 1972.

When the Court in its wisdom decided that the prosecution of this case would not hamper the discharge of Mr. Clinton's presidential duties, Buckley argues that the President, regardless of his guilt or innocence, should have gotten rid of the trouble by paying part or all of the $700,000 Mrs. Jones sought and offering a cryptic apology: "Whatever I did that gave offense to Mrs. Jones, I regret."

I agree that Paula Jones and her lawyers with their dubious case would have jumped to seize such a noncommittal apology along with all or even a reasonable part of the requested $700,000. That might have been a financial burden for the President, but it would have saved both him and the nation the messy process that has since raged on, to say nothing of millions of dollars in taxpayers' funds spent by Mr. Starr in his investigation growing out of the President's sworn deposition in the now-defunct Jones case.

The crimes compiled by Nixon dwarf anything that Mr. Clinton is likely to be accused of doing.

I am willing to wager that Mr. Clinton and his legal team now wish that they had pursued the Buckley advice of last April with regard to Paula Jones.

There are other points in the speech with which I agree, as well as some with which I disagree. In the latter category, I disagree with the impression, intended or otherwise, Mr. Buckley seems to give when discussing parallels between the Nixon impeachment effort and the current Clinton crisis. The crimes compiled by Nixon in serious violation of federal and constitutional law dwarf anything that Clinton is likely to be accused of doing. Indeed, as I write, no legal accusation of any kind has even been filed against the President by the Independent Counsel.

Mr. Buckley asserts: "What the Left most wanted was to discredit Nixon and get rid of him." That may be true, but it was not "the Left" that got rid of Nixon. Mr. Nixon went down when even his staunchest Republican supporters on the House Judiciary Committee turned against him after listening to the President's own recorded voice in the Oval Office plotting the violation of federal laws and constitutional safeguards. It was Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott and Senator Barry Goldwater who went to the White House and told Mr. Nixon he should resign.

A Buckley point with which I strongly agree relative to the Clinton crisis is that "whatever the concerns for morality and integrity the political consideration inevitably figures." Mr. Starr may see his pursuit as essentially legal, but in the last analysis the Starr report and Mr. Clinton will be judged by the Congress. That body is filled with politicians—of which I was one for a quarter of a century—not by experts in either legal technicalities or the moral code. Politics is the process by which we govern ourselves. It will prevail for good or ill in the resolution of the current presidential crisis.

One final point: Mr. Buckley observes that "From time to time it is . . . appropriate to wonder about the judgment of the majority." As a presidential contender who in 1972

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lost 49 states to Richard Nixon 18 months before he resigned in disgrace, I can only say, Amen! to this sometime wonderment about the majority. □

Lance Morrow

I SUSPECT—that is, I hope—that history will view Bill Clinton not as a precedent but as a phenomenon, not likely to be repeated. The future will write him down as a cautionary tale.

Mr. Buckley's first proposition suggests that the President's failure to settle the Paula Jones case was an early warning signal of his defective leadership. Agreed. As Mr. Buckley says, "Expert politicians are expected to avoid unnecessary crises." The Lewinsky mess, however picturesque, has been entirely, bizarrely unnecessary.

At the same time, it now comes to seem very nearly inevitable. Mr. Clinton's personality has developed in the Presidency like a Polaroid, the true image emerging ever more clearly. In the White House, for better and for worse, a man completes his own deepest tendencies (as, say, Richard Nixon did, as Lyndon Johnson did, as Franklin Roosevelt did). A President does not seem to have a choice in the matter. The office is a long exposure of character.

However hard Mr. Clinton has tried to persuade us otherwise, I doubt that our judgment of character—in a politician, in a spouse, in anyone—rigorously distinguishes between the public and the private selves. Rather, we instinctively form a rounded picture. If we had known at the time about John Kennedy's astonishingly reckless sex life, we would have judged him differently. If we had known about it in 1960, he would not have become President.

But we also make calculations of scale: If Americans had found out about Lucy Mercer just after, say, Pearl Harbor, the sensational news of FDR's romantic drives through Rock Creek Park with a woman not his wife might not, in the urgencies of the moment, have commanded quite the public attention that has been lavished, in the prosperous peacetime of the Nineties, upon Bill Clinton's curiously adolescent fling with an intern in the Oval Office.

My impressions of Bill Clinton have, in my mind, a quality of time-lapse photography. In the early Eighties a knowledgeable friend told me: "You should go talk to a guy named Bill Clinton, the governor in Arkansas. He's the smartest man in the Democratic Party."

I asked: "You think he might make a President one day?"

Long pause. "Maybe. But he's got scandal problems. Sex problems."

That was my first word on Clinton. Over the years, I repeatedly heard Willey-like, Jones-like stories that filled in the specifics. Does history care? Are these things "private," as Mr. Clinton says? The developing polaroid of Bill Clinton came to look like William Kennedy Smith, not Cary Grant.

Defective presidential leadership? Yes. The mess never should have happened; or else it is Bill Clinton's destiny. Settling the Paula Jones case early on would have contained the immediate problem. But the dilemma never should have arisen, period. Odd that when evading the draft Bill Clinton took a great deal of foxy care to avoid any radicalism that would make him less than "viable" in the political future; yet he engaged all along in sexual behavior that has ended by making him less than viable as a President. Mr. Clinton's defective leadership arises from the deeper problems of his defective character.

We know that Bill Clinton possesses rare genius as a performing artist of politics. The gift has taken him as far as an American politician can go. He may be the best campaigner in our history. Like a dolphin, he works an audience with sonar, bouncing signals off the folk to get their emotional resonance and range, and then, when he has a fix, playing a fluent and seductive song, using the very minds of the audience as his instrument. I witnessed this first in January of 1992 in Keene, N.H., at the opening of an upstairs Clinton-for-President primary headquarters. Silence is part of the sonar; Clinton listens brilliantly. After I watched him listen to an angry woman talking about abortion, picking up her emotional and biographical signals, and then heard his reply, I told myself that he would be the next President of the United States.

Mr. Buckley's propositions are stated with a magisterial and suddenly scathing restraint. I doubt that Mr. Buckley ever invested much hope in Bill Clinton. I did so, however—long ago; that may be the reason that my sadness at the denouement gives way from time to time to a disgusted fury.

Does the mere sexual stuff matter? It was always heedless to think not. Look at the wreckage Mr. Clinton has brought down around his ears, upon himself, his family, his party, and his Administration. To blame it all on Ken Starr, or on the famous anti-Arkansas conspiracy, is to take the victim mentality to a new level of irresponsibility.

The Lewinsky mess has been bizarrely unnecessary. At the same time, it now comes to seem very nearly inevitable.

After the 1992 election, I wrote a *Time* Magazine Man of the Year cover story on Bill Clinton. It subsequently earned the coveted Janet Cooke Award, a sort of journalistic Oscar bestowed by Brent Bozell's *MediaWatch* upon the year's most egregious item of liberal media twaddle. Whether I deserved this honor is perhaps not for me to say. In any case, I did express high, and in retrospect rather fatuous, hopes for the coming Clinton Administration. Some of those hopes have been realized. Like others with whom I would be happy to associate (David Gergen, A. M. Rosenthal, for example), I cherished, for a time, a kind of fresh-start, non-partisan, post-ideological, post–Cold War faith that a new-paradigm Clinton might lead the nation brilliantly toward . . . toward, well, the bridge to the twenty-first century!

Who knew that, all along, my friend in the early Eighties was right that the petard was in Bill Clinton's trousers? □

Mr. Morrow is a contributor to Time Magazine.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

September 6, 1998

Dear Rusty!

Need some help here. Tipper and I are going nuts trying to figure this all out. Tell us what you think:

Scenario 1: "Limited Modified Hang Loose." We play it cool. I continue to support the President, though Tipper is described as "privately appalled and deeply angry." She acts chilly to him in public. I look like a loyal friend caught in a bind. Bill hangs on to the Presidency, I serve as a go-between with the moderate wing. Upside: This is pretty much what I had planned on all along, and has the added benefit of being true. Downside: We'll probably go down in flames in November's mid-terms, and I'll get blamed. All in all, I think this is the worst-case scenario. Except for . . .

Scenario 2: "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" Possibly the worst-case scenario, now that I think of it. (Well, I guess the worst case is if Janet Reno appoints a special prosecutor to look into the whole campaign-finance mess. But by the time that happens, Tipper and I figure, I'll probably be President and the country will be rallying behind the new most ethical Administration in history.) The fallout from the Lewinsky thing gets worse, and the airwaves are filled with sanctimonious, pious hand-wringers droning on and on about morality and truth. Which, to be fair, is my act. It'll be hard to work up the normal amount of piety when I've got to be defending the President. It'll be impossible to talk about policy issues being "for the children" if we've got a President chasing them around the White House study. And if I can't describe things as being "for the children," then I don't know what I'll do, which brings me to . . .

Scenario 3: "Here Come the Scolds." Then again, this scenario isn't great. It involves all those guys out there, the Liebermans and the Nunns and the Bradleys, getting big points for scolding the President (something, need I remind you, that I'm not in any position to do). So now Bob Kerrey steps in and swings a few late kicks. The press loves the whole "We're shocked and appalled and morally indignant" act. They look stern and mature and . . . let's face it, presidential. One or two of them thinks to himself, "Well, since everyone is telling me how presidential I look, it must be true. So why not actually be President?" During the primaries, instead of mopping up the floor with Dick Gephardt's sorry little attempt, I get squeezed on the right and on the left, and suddenly I'm the Lamar Alexander of the Democratic Party. Tipper thinks this is the most likely scenario, and that Bill Bradley is the most likely one to, as she puts it, "eat my lunch." Personally, though, I'm more worried about . . .

Scenario 4: "Many More Monicas." Turns out she wasn't the only intern. When the 3M revelations hit, sometime after Bob Woodward gets back from East Hampton, the Administration is rocked by scandal. Bill holds on for a while, but eventually resigns under protest. I take over just in time to face a filibuster-proof Republican Senate and a strengthened Republican House. And you just know that when Bill and Hillary go, they won't go quietly. No padding around San Clemente and maintaining a dignified silence. Oh no. There'll be interviews and Geraldo exclusives and public second-guessing about President-Gore-should-do-this and President-Gore-should-do-that. So between a recalcitrant Congress and a shadow President, how on earth am I going to, well, save the earth? Though as much as I dread Scenario 4, I think I should be more concerned about . . .

Scenario 5: "I.P.O. and an I.O.U." The Lewinsky thing simmers. Starr issues his report. The House votes for censure. Things die down. Bob Rubin resigns, just in time to re-assume his position at Goldman, Sachs, just in time to participate in Goldman's initial public offering, which itself comes just in time to beat the stock-market crash (caused, in part, by Rubin's absence from Treasury, and a Wall Street Journal article entitled "Whither Treasury? Disarray in a Once-Well-Oiled Machine"), which ushers in a mild recession, which lasts until November of 2000, which is just what happened to George Bush Sr. in 1992 and what will now happen to me, which means that George Bush Jr. gets to be President. Okay, okay, I know I've said it before, but this time I mean it: this is absolutely, positively the worst worst worst case.

Write soon, Rusty. Tipper and I need to talk to someone we can trust. Also, we can't really afford Dick Morris this early in the process. What I need is a Scenario 6: "The Happy Ending." Got any ideas?

Help!!

Your pal, Al

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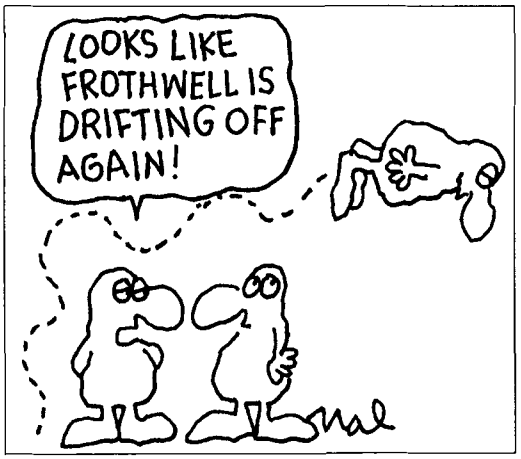
help



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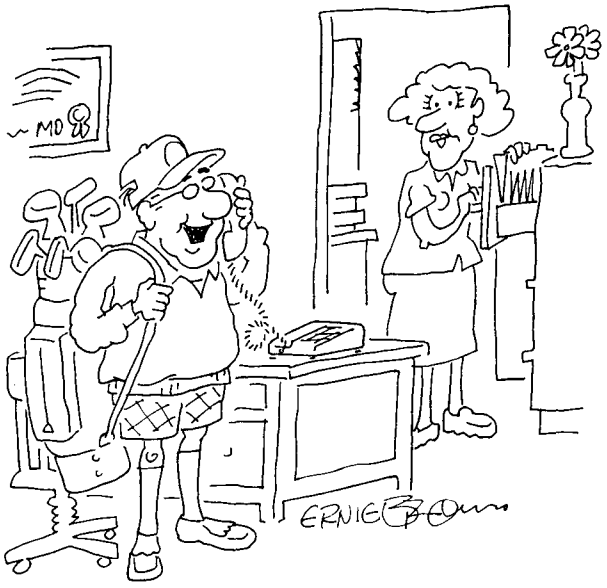
"I'm sorry to say, your emerging-market fund just submerged."

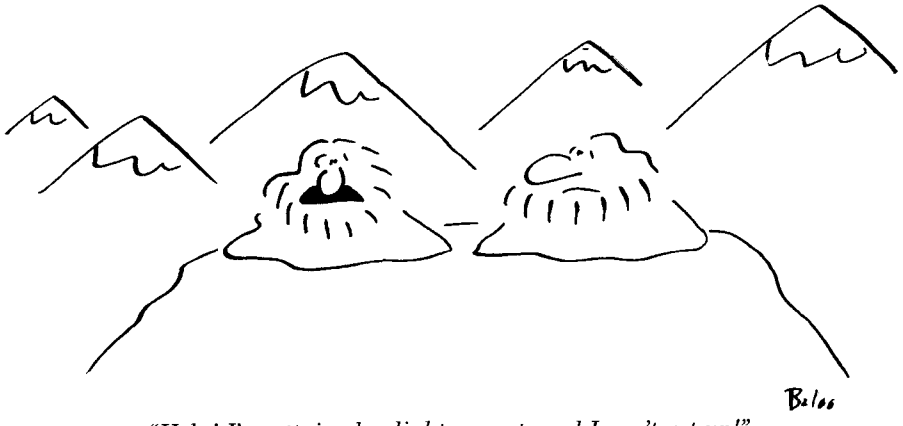
Revisiting Mayor Giuliani

The liberals despise him—
The subways run on time.
The streets are clean as Amsterdam's
And though a touch of grime
Still lingers in the boroughs,
In Big Town, business hums.
Off camera, the Democrats
Love how he boots the bums.

—W. H. von Dreele



"Take one aspirin a day for fourteen days, and call me in two weeks."



"Help! I've attained enlightenment, and I can't get up!"

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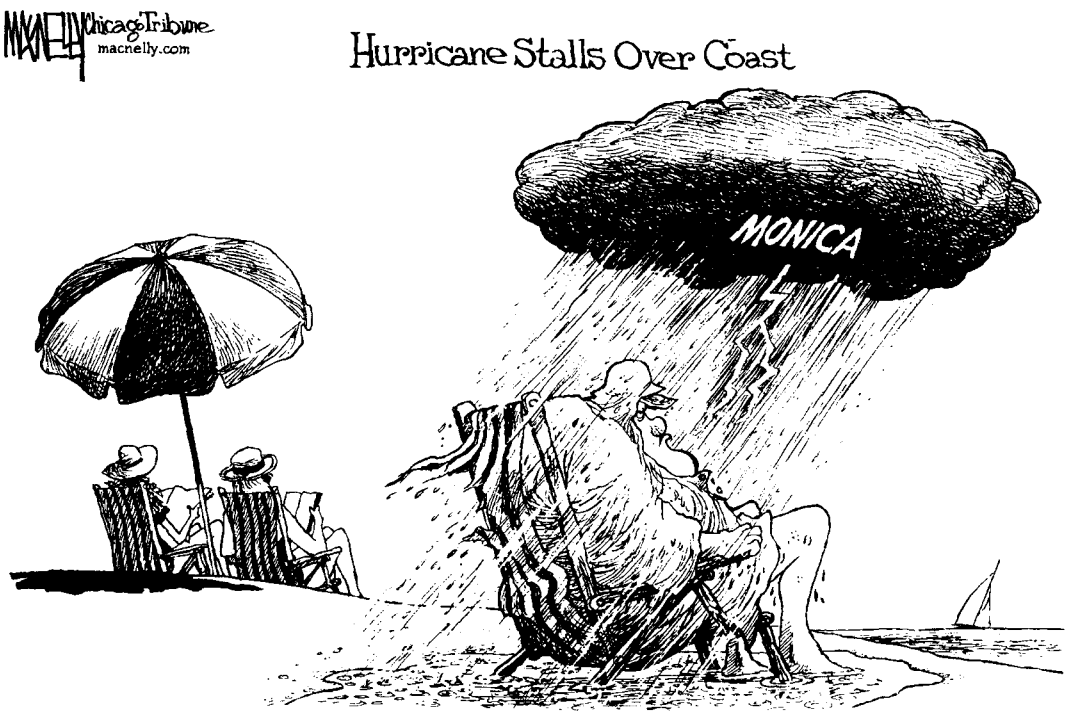

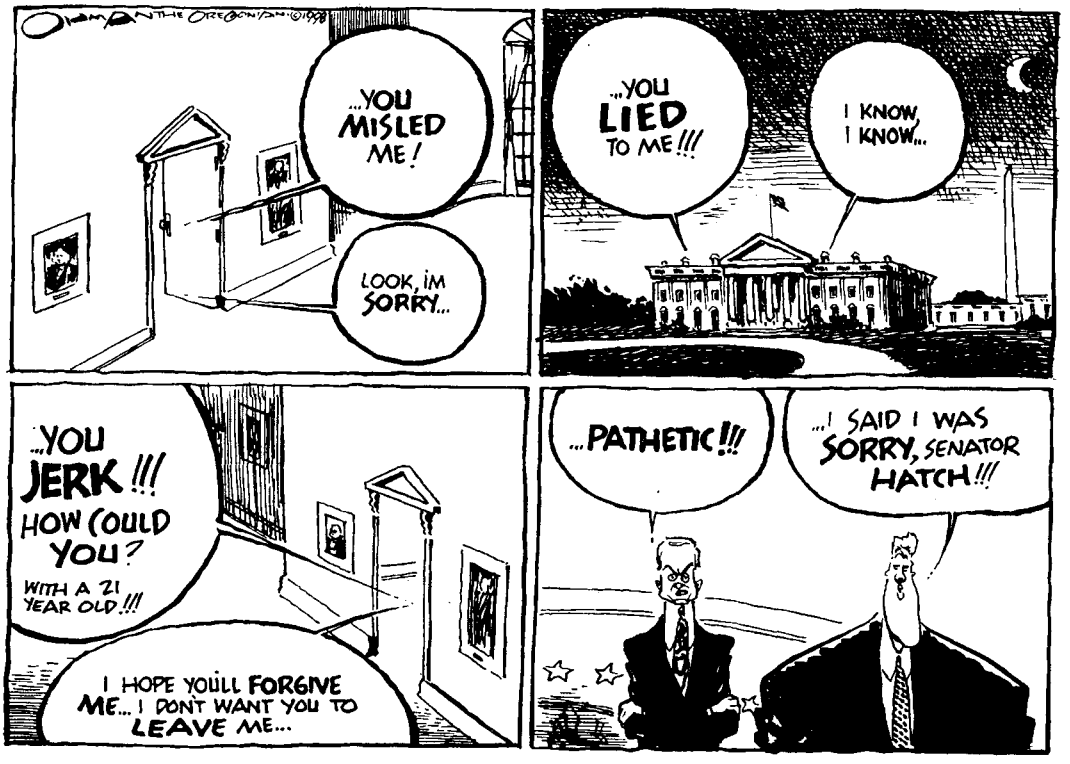
...YOU MISLED ME!
LOOK, IM SORRY...
...YOU LIED TO ME!!!
I KNOW, I KNOW...
...YOU JERK!!! HOW COULD YOU?
WITH A 21 YEAR OLD!!!
I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME... I DON'T WANT YOU TO LEAVE ME...
...PATHETIC!!!
...I SAID I WAS SORRY, SENATOR HATCH!!!

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

The Love Doctor

FLORENCE KING

AT LAST Bill Clinton's elusive legacy has been nailed down and rendered succinct. Like Oedipus, Electra, Napoleon, and those beset Viennese women named "Anna," he will be enshrined in the pages of psychiatric literature as an eponym for what ails us. "Sexual addiction" lacks punch and "Don Juan" rings fewer and fewer bells in our dumbed-down culture, but thanks to this exquisitely well-timed book, compulsive tomcatting will henceforth and forevermore be known as the "Clinton Syndrome."

The author, Jerome D. Levin, is a psychologist in private practice who teaches at Manhattan's New School for Social Research, trains addiction counselors, and voted for his subject twice, but he does not sound like a typical representative of this usually earnest and supercilious scene. He gives Clinton due credit but no quarter, treats conservative assessments such as R. Emmett Tyrrell's with seriousness and respect, and exchanges the droning jargon of the helping professions for a refreshing down-to-earth authorial voice ("the guy needs to be liked and loved too much").

The Clinton Syndrome: The President and the Self-Destructive Nature of Sexual Addiction, by Jerome D. Levin, PhD (Prima, 272 pp., $24.95)

Levin introduces his theme, "Sexual addiction is not about sex," by pointing out something so obvious that we are left wondering why no one ever caught it before: Monica Lewinsky looks like Clinton's mother—the same abundant black hair, heavy makeup, and general aura of flashiness. Moreover, she arrived in the White House not long after his mother's death on January 6, 1994, and was there during two other psychologically significant losses: the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on November 4, 1995, and the death of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown in a plane crash on April 3, 1996.

The three deaths were a virtual re-enactment of the traumatic events that shaped Clinton's early life. The loss of his mother took him back to the first time he lost her, when she left him with his grandparents while she attended nursing school in Louisiana. Ron Brown's death in a plane crash replicated his biological father's death in a car crash before he was born, and the assassination of Rabin robbed him of an older man he regarded as a surrogate father.

Roman Genn

"Anyone watching the video of Clinton at Rabin's funeral would be unable to deny his devastation." The Israeli leader, says Levin, was Clinton's masculine ideal; a heavy drinker who could hold his liquor and still function, not an alcoholic failure like stepfather Roger Clinton. Rabin was also a man's man, a tested warrior whose physical courage had helped establish his nation and whose moral courage had helped sustain it. Rabin's was an unequivocal identity that made Clinton uncomfortably aware of his own reputation as a draft-dodger with his finger in the wind who was ruled by polls and focus groups.

"The sex addict feels unloved and unlovable and so looks obsessively for proof that this is not so." Of the three deaths, Rabin's was the most important in the chronological scheme because Clinton's relationship with Monica began the same month. In need of validation and reassurance after having come face to face with his insecurities, "Clinton had about as much chance of leaving her alone as a cocaine addict has of passing up a line."

The American Psychiatric Association's checklist of the symptoms of sexual addiction fits Clinton like a glove, especially the first three: 1) Sexual activity that interferes with work, 2) Sexual activity in potentially dangerous situations, and 3) Repeated sex-related legal problems.

The key to his behavior—the First Rosebud, so to speak—is his early fear of abandonment that was set in motion by the realization that he was a posthumous child, and by the extended absence of his mother while he was a toddler. When she returned home she made up for lost time by doting on him, much to the resentment of his grandmother, who had enjoyed exclusive doting rights during her daughter's absence and was not about to relinquish them without a fight. And so they fought over him, two painted, dyed-haired dames out-doting each other to see who could shower Billy with the most love and attention, until he soaked up the lesson that women are where it's at; if you want to be adored they're the people to see.

Using promiscuous sex to banish fears of being left alone is a losing proposition. Women who are escorted in by state troopers are invariably escorted

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out with the same dispatch. Quickies can only rekindle unresolved abandonment anxieties, which must then be tranquilized with more quickies, until the swordsman arrives at 5) Tolerance: needing increased amounts of sexual activity to achieve the high or desired effect. This has been the story of Bill Clinton's life. The only territory he seems not to have marked is 8) An enduring desire to control sexual activity and simultaneous failed attempts to do so.

The author believes the Kathleen Willey incident proves that Clinton's behavior has crossed over into compulsion. Once again he calls our attention to significant dates. The Oval Office groping took place on November 29, 1993. In October, Clinton had learned that his 1984 gubernatorial campaign had been named by the Resolution Trust Corporation as one of nine criminal referrals

Clinton's addiction has progressed 'to the point where the potential to self-destruct is now evident.'

made as a result of its investigation of Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan. The Whitewater issue was officially out and under investigation, yet Clinton took a chance on getting caught making sexual advances in the White House at this of all times, and, as Mrs. Willey related, seemed to be excited by the risk.

His refusal to settle the Paula Jones case before it reached the damaging discovery phase indicates, says Dr. Levin, that he is so deeply in denial that he might well have lied to his lawyers rather than admit to them, and therefore to himself, that his sex life had been out of control.

Levin does not think Clinton is a sociopath, nor is he self-destructive in the usual meaning of the word, but his addiction has progressed "to the point where the potential to self-destruct is now evident." Levin finds troubling hints in Clinton's reaction to Nixon's death. "Clinton was inexplicably grief-ridden and led an unusually (and some say, inappropriately) prolonged period of public mourning for Nixon." To

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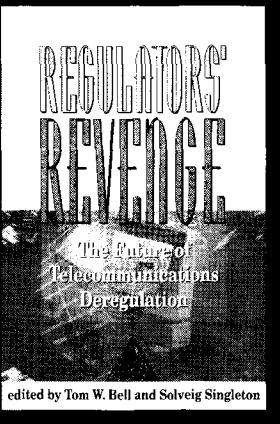

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Levin, Clinton's identification with Nixon, when considered alongside his identification with John F. Kennedy, amounts to a morbid fascination with disaster that bodes ill.

"I cannot help but wonder whether Clinton has hit bottom. As far as we know, Lewinsky is the last name on his doomsday list. However . . . I would speculate that he is currently controlling his behavior because he is too frightened to do otherwise and that he has not really relinquished his denial. If this is the case, he remains vulnerable and might yet take that final and fatal step, get involved with another woman, become mired in yet another scandal, and end his Presidency in disgrace. If he does, his identification with Nixon will be complete." □

The West under Siege

ROGER KIMBALL

From Plato to NATO: The Idea of the West and Its Opponents, by David Gress (Free Press, 610 pp., $28)

SEVERAL years ago, I lectured at Williams College about some recent trends in American higher education. The movement that has come to be known as multiculturalism was just then picking up steam, and colleges and universities across the country were falling over themselves to dismantle their "Eurocentric" humanities curricula. Only a year or two earlier, Jesse Jackson, protesting a required course in Western civilization at Stanford University, had led students on his famous march chanting: "Hey hey, ho ho, Western Culture's got to go." My talk was partly an attack on such manifestations of radical multiculturalism, partly a defense of making the study of Western civilization the center of a liberal-arts education. Alas, my remarks were not well received. I remember in particular an exasperated young woman who, during the question period, informed me that undergraduates should not focus their attention on Western culture because, after all, "Western civilization is responsible for most of the world's ills."

At the time, I wondered what her parents would have thought about that declaration, especially when the tuition bills at Williams came due. And I thought about that young woman again when reading David Gress's masterly new book, *From Plato to NATO: The Idea of the West and Its Opponents*. I hope that she has an opportunity to read it. She would doubtless be pleased to discover that Mr. Gress, a Danish-born classicist and historian, agrees with her that the West has been responsible for much cruelty, oppression, injustice, and general nastiness. She would perhaps be less pleased that Mr. Gress nevertheless mounts a vigorous defense of the West—not least because it has done more than any other tradition to acknowledge and remedy those evils.

Such tensions—between the ideal and the real, between rhetoric espousing noble causes and the often less palatable realities that assure the success of those causes—are at the heart of Mr. Gress's patient historical inquiry in this book. He has two main enemies in his sights: the multiculturalists, who attack the idea of the West, and well-meaning boosters who misunderstand and prettify it. Like other thoughtful commentators on our cultural prospects—Alasdair MacIntyre and Allan Bloom come to mind—Mr. Gress understands that superficiality is as dangerous to the future of the Western tradition as outright hostility. Hence the irony of his title. "From Plato to NATO" is the mildly contemptuous epithet students use to describe those "Great Books" college courses that purvey a simple Whiggish tale about the origins and development of Western civilization. According to this cheery story, it all began with the Greeks, who invented democracy; things then got a push in the Renaissance, which invented individuality; and then, three ninety-minute class periods later, the West really comes into its own with the Enlightenment, which abolished religious superstition, instituted human rights, and formed the perfect prelude to absolute perfection: the liberal, secular, relativistic society of present-day America and Western Europe.

In other words, prizes for everyone. Mr. Gress refers to this scenario—a staple of so many college survey courses—as "the Grand Narrative," and a large part of his book is devoted to correcting the "chronological myopia" that it presupposes. "One of the basic flaws of the narrative," he notes, "was precisely its moralism, the fact that it presented the story of the West as a pedagogical adventure with a happy ending." Not that Mr. Gress is against happy endings. Rather, he is against the sentimentalization of history for ideological purposes—which means in part that he is against the habit of rescripting the past to suit present definitions of virtue. "The Greeks, Romans, and early Christians," he observes drily, "were not protoliberals."

Moralism is not the only problem with the Grand Narrative. There is also the issue of simplification. One of Mr. Gress's chief aims in this book is to show that, throughout history, "various Wests coexisted, defined in terms of different principles, regions, beliefs, and ambitions. The West is not a single story, but several stories, most of which neither began with Plato nor ended with NATO." And then there is the problem of hubris. Part of what drives moralistic theories of history is the sense of their own unlimited scope and applicability. Anyone who has dipped into Hegel's writings on history knows the scenario. History for Hegel is the unfolding of the absolute idea—"God's walk through the world," he called it—that just happens to find full flower in Prussia in the early nineteenth century in the person of G. W. F. Hegel. Hegel's faith in this idea, he tells us, "is not a presupposition of study; it is a *result* which happens to be known to myself because I already know the whole."

It is a curious irony that when 'the West' is everywhere triumphant there should be such dissatisfaction with its achievements.

Mr. Kimball is the managing editor of The New Criterion.

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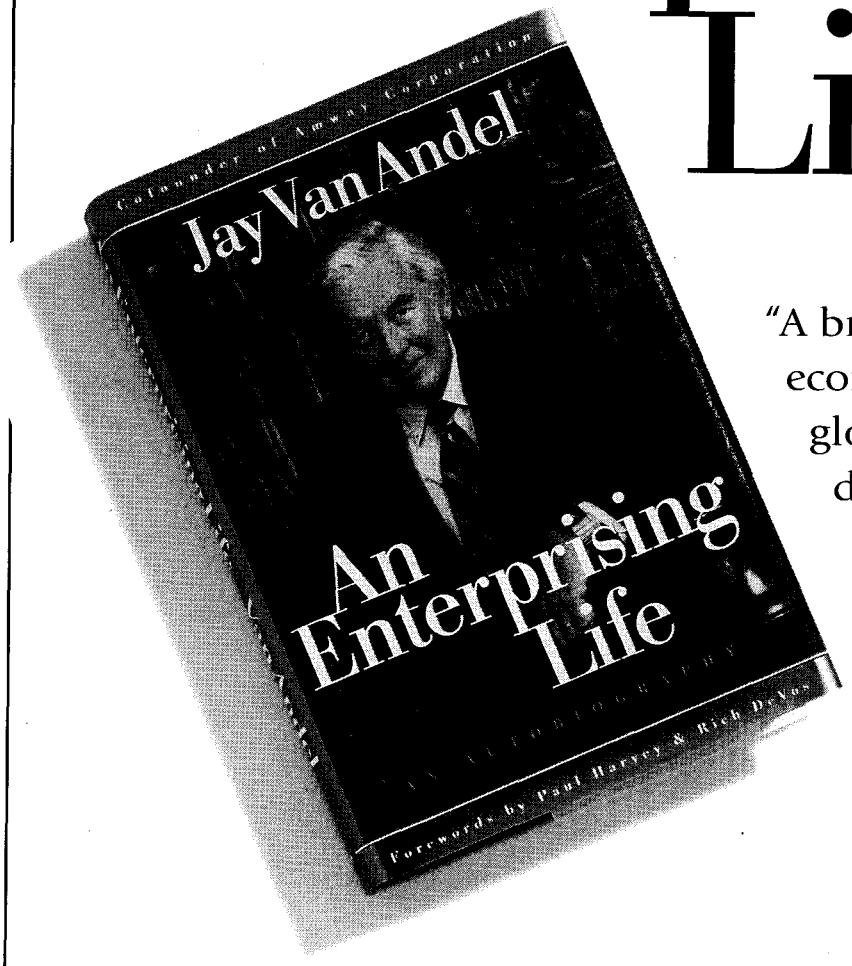

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Nice work if you can get it, of course, but rather hard on anyone who doesn't happen to be Hegel.

MR. GRESS brings an historian's skepticism and robust sense of the particular to all such claims. Accordingly, "abstract," "universal," and their cognates are words that appear again and again as terms of opprobrium in his book (the last chapter is called "The Failure of Universalism"). Thus it emerges that a large part of what is wrong with the Grand Narrative has to do with the implications of the word "Grand." As Mr. Gress points out, the Grand Narrative is not wrong to see liberty at the heart of Western identity; it *is* wrong to identify liberty as "an abstract, philosophical principle" that is transhistorical and universal. "The key historical insight underlying this book," Mr. Gress writes, "is that liberty, and Western identity in general, are not primarily to be understood in the abstract, but as a set of practices and institutions that evolved, not from Greece, but from the synthesis of classical, Christian, and Germanic culture that took shape from the fifth to the eighth centuries." In other words, the pageant of freedom is described not by ambitious philosophical systems—"the illusory vantage point of universal humanism"—but in concrete political arrangements: "niches of liberty," Mr. Gress calls them, that do not so much contradict as abet established power relations.

From Plato to NATO is a richly textured, erudite work that moves with ease from classical Greece through early Christendom and the Middle Ages to a variety of present-day social, political, and economic controversies. Readers may occasionally feel that the one scholarly imperative to which Mr. Gress has paid insufficient attention is Occam's Razor. (It was Dr. Johnson, I believe, who observed that it is sometimes harder to write a short book than a long one.) But the proliferation of detail here is not gratuitous. Behind it all is the effort to show through the fabric of history that freedom did not evolve apart from the realities of political power—that, on the contrary, it first arose as an "unintended side effect of the drive for power." Political and social liberty, Mr. Gress shows, was a "by-product of power" that "ultimately overshadowed its source, establishing the local and partial rights to property, security, and influence on government that enabled economic development and led to popular sovereignty and modern liberal democracy."

In the end, *From Plato to NATO* belongs to that growing body of literature that turns a critical eye on the Enlightenment, not to undo its achievements but to circumscribe its ambitions. The hero of this chastened view of the Enlightenment is likely to be Hume, with his common-sense skepticism, not Rousseau, with his megalomaniacal "virtue." And the goal is not cosmopolitan liberal secularism but a renewed sense of historical and cultural rootedness.

It is a curious irony that at the end of the 1990s, when "the West" seems everywhere triumphant, there should be such weariness and dissatisfaction with its achievements. For of course that privileged young woman from Williams is hardly alone in concluding that the West "is responsible for most of the world's ills." Some such sentiment is at the heart of multiculturalism, which is also to say that it is at the heart of much elite liberal opinion today. Susan Sontag's infamous comment from the 1960s that the white race was "the cancer of human history" is only one of the more histrionic formulations of this current of feeling.

One of the chief ambitions of *From Plato to NATO* is to challenge such assertions. But, as Mr. Gress shows, this can not be accomplished by formulating abstract ideals, against which the West—like every other historical tradition—will always be found wanting. "The relationship of prosperity to liberty and power remains the chief feature of Western identity," he writes in his concluding chapter:

> and that is why history becomes more, not less, important in the supposed age of universal values. It is precisely because that relationship was not universal, but particular, that it needs to be constantly recalled and understood if Western identity is not to evaporate. In the multi-civilizational world of the third millennium, the West will not long survive if it forgets its history or the dynamic that produced its particular voice and contribution to the chorus of humanity.

Can the West survive—and thrive—in the third millennium? The answer depends in part on whether the "chronological myopia" and "historical illiteracy" that Mr. Gress warns about worsen. No one has the answer to that question, but *From Plato to NATO* is a welcome sign that the battle has not been lost. □

A Son's Tribute

JACOB NEUSNER

'MAGNIFIED and sanctified may his great name be in the world that he created as he wills, and may his kingdom come in your lives and in your days and in the lives of all the house of Israel, swiftly and soon." The Kaddish prayer in Jewish worship, the counterpart to the Lord's Prayer in Christian worship, punctuates synagogue services. At specified points mourners recite the Kaddish, so sanctifying God's name and affirming God's will even at the encounter with death. When Leon Wieseltier's father died, he undertook to recite the mourner's Kaddish at public worship three times a day—in the morning, at dusk, and at night—and he did so for 11 months both in Washington, D.C., where he works as literary editor of *The New Republic*, and elsewhere.

Kaddish, by Leon Wieseltier (Knopf, 585 pp., $27.50)

He tells the story with grace, setting the stage for his reflections on the great issues of life and death, considered through the prisms of memory and grief. These deep thoughts emerge from a dialogue with the great Judaic intellects of the ages, whom Wieseltier knows as companions. The result is a profound work not merely about Judaism but of Judaism. I cannot point to another piece of writing in the English

Mr. Neusner, a professor of religion at the University of South Florida and at Bard College, is the editor, with his son Noam Neusner, of The Book of Jewish Wisdom *(Continuum).*

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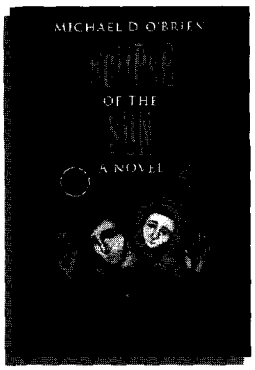

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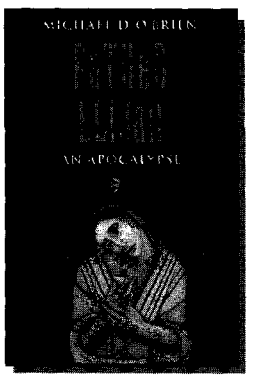

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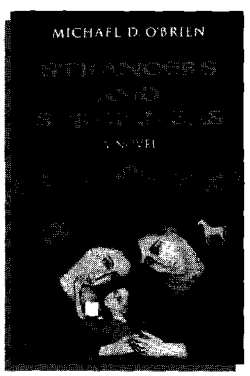

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language that accomplishes within—and for—Judaism what Wieseltier has here achieved. His book is simply a masterpiece.

Out of his personal narrative of his year of mourning, he time after time leads us to a topic he wishes to consider, walks us through sages' discussions of the problem he has chosen, then takes us through his responses to those discussions, gradually winning our confidence not only in his learning but also, and especially, in his educated judgment. He enlists erudition in the service of the soul. What emerges is a dialogue at the depths of the human experience recorded, in their particular idiom, out of their distinctive perspective, by the Judaic saints of past and present. But what turns learning into literature is the narrative voice—controlled, spare, restrained—that Wieseltier has invented for himself.

Mr. Wieseltier enlists erudition in the service of the soul.

For example, in reflecting on the theme of inheritance in father–son relationships, he begins with determinism and freedom, the concrete terms in which Maimonides, the great medieval philosopher of Judaism, laid out the problem. Then he intersperses his exposition with a conversation with his bereaved sister, punctuates the lesson with his own aphorisms, tells us how his praying went that day, reflects on tradition, and finally reaches inheritance, turning the topic into the occasion for his own profound reflection. He establishes the tone, austere but delicate, early on and sustains it throughout. Here is a snippet that captures that tone—smack in the middle of Wieseltier's exposition of a rather recondite rule of public worship:

> This morning there were mists blowing through the streets. Georgetown had the fresh, sturdy look of a village by the sea. The familiar houses and lanes presented an unfamiliar aspect, as if the fog were clarifying the scene. The fog was a kind of light. If a fog can be a light, then I am ready to return to my kabbalist. At the teahouse, I read Aaron's discussion of the procedure of the funeral.

As he proceeds, his "I" takes on the quality of a "we," as Jewry at every time and place joins in the conversation. He moves the story along, from reflections on dying and mourning in general, to thought about the particular rites of mourning, to martyrdom, all within the circle of holy Israel—the faith community, not the state or the ethnic group.

That is not to suggest that this book makes life easy for its readers. I wonder whether any masterpiece does. Mr. Wieseltier does not give much guidance, and he demands nearly superhuman patience. His book has no table of contents and no running heads. He never starts a section by telling the reader the theme he will discuss, and he never ends by summarizing what he has said. His readers have to discover for themselves the connections he has in mind between one thing and the next. No college teacher could imagine writing such a book; but Wieseltier is not a college teacher, he is a writer. He does not mean only to communicate ideas and insights. He means, through his art, to affect, to change the reader. And because he pays the reader so high a compliment, demanding so much from his partner in the dialogue, he succeeds.

I wish Mr. Wieseltier had given deeper thought to the idea of the resurrection of the dead. Judaism, like Christianity, affirms the resurrection of the dead for eternal life, and that conviction places death in a different light from the gloom that pervades the secular encounter with it. But in his own way, he has given his father a life beyond the grave, by telling this compelling story. I doubt that many readers will reach the final sections of the book without tears.

The publisher calls the work a "spiritual journal." That misconstrues what Wieseltier has accomplished in this marriage of learning, reflection, and experience. No father ever got a better Kaddish from his son. And no son, in remembering his father, ever formed of the encounter a greater blessing. As I said, it is simply a masterpiece. □

Wholly Sanctimony

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

THE first thing anyone will want to know about Philip Roth's 18th novel is whether it is as superbly good as his 17th, *American Pastoral*. The answer is: No, nowhere near. Is it any good at all? Sure: taken simply as a novel, *I Married a Communist* is better than most of those that cross a reviewer's desk. Roth is a pro, for Heaven's sake; he knows how to do the business. There is, however, an attitude, an *odor* to *IMAC*, that I think will make this particular book unpalatable to readers of this particular magazine, as it was to me.

The story is narrated by Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's favorite self-impersonation, now in his sixties. Nathan encounters his high-school English teacher, Murray Ringold, ninety years old. What follows is a mix of reminiscences by Nathan and Murray, all centered on the tale of Murray's brother Ira, the Communist of the title. Nathan himself knew Ira briefly, and idolized him for a year or two before leaving home to attend college.

I Married a Communist, by Philip Roth (Houghton Mifflin, 336 pp., $26)

Ira was a radio personality until he was blacklisted in 1951.

So here we are among the familiar stage scenery of the McCarthy period: those betrayals, those namings of names, those lists. This, I admit, predisposed me against the book. I don't doubt that Tailgunner Joe was a malicious clown, who generated much petty injustice; but in the rhetoric of the Left, it is all so overblown. They are forever telling us, as Murray does in *IMAC*, that there were "Thousands and thousands of Americans destroyed in those years . . ." On further exposition, "destroyed" turns out to mean that the victim lost a glamorous job like Ira's, or a rewarding one like Murray's, and had to take up the kind of dull, badly paid work most people do all their lives.

Mr. Derbyshire is the author of the novel Seeing Calvin Coolidge in a Dream. *His father-in-law is a member of the Chinese Communist Party.*

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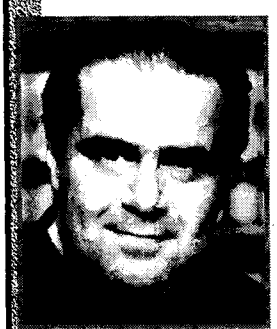

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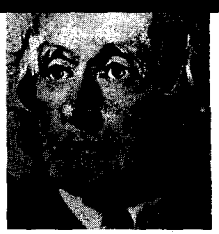

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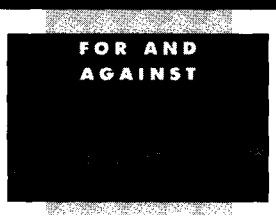

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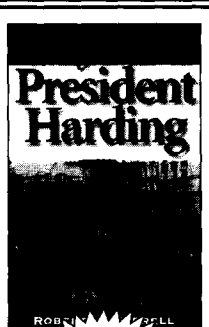

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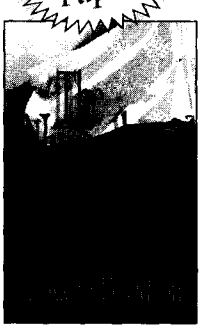

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Meanwhile, in those nations that fell to Communism, "destroyed" had a more straightforward meaning—and not for thousands, but for tens of millions.

Then there is that *odor*—not of sanctity, but of sanctimony. Everywhere in this book—in the mouths of Murray, Ira, and Nathan himself—is the insufferable self-righteousness of the Left, served up neat, without any irony that I could detect. In one of the least convincing passages, Ira chokes up—literally—at the recollection of seeing Iranian children living on a garbage dump. What sensitivity! Sure (Roth is telling us) these Commies may have been wrong-headed, but what idealists they were! So they were; so were hundreds of thousands of the Germans who died for Hitler. People will act with great nobility in a foul cause. Does Mr. Roth have any plans for a book called *I Married a Nazi*?

Everywhere in Philip Roth's new novel is the insufferable self-righteousness of the Left.

Contrariwise with the villains of the novel, Bryden Grant and his wife, Katrina. It is Katrina who ghosts the book *I Married a Communist*, in which Ira's wife exposes him. (A title within a title, see? Roth can never altogether resist scratching that self-referential itch. One of his previous novels contained a character called Philip Roth.) Bryden, a former gossip columnist, gets elected to Congress and appointed to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. As a member of that committee, he causes Murray to lose his job. Being Republicans and anti-Communists, the Grants must, of course, be portrayed as moral nullities. No choking up over Third World kiddies for them. From the viewpoint of this novel, no anti-Communist—nobody to the right of Adlai Stevenson, in fact—could possibly be motivated by anything but vanity and greed. Says Murray:

> All that mattered to the Grants was how to make Ira serve their cause. And what was their cause? America? Democracy? If ever patriotism was a pretext for self-seeking, for self-devotion, for self-adoration . . .

Murray then commences a long tirade about seeing Richard Nixon's funeral on TV. I don't think you need to be a fan of the 37th President to find this passage loathsome. Kicking a man when he's down is bad enough; but when he's *dead*? Not that the living are spared in this unseemly rant.

> [Senator Bob] Dole and his flood of lachrymose clichés. "Doctor" Kissinger . . . with all the cold authority of that voice dipped in sludge . . . Ronald Reagan snapping the honor guard . . . that salute of his that was *always* half meshugeh . . . [Roth's italics.]

What are those quotes doing around Kissinger's title? (Later in the passage, after some sneering at his figure, Kissinger is referred to as "the court Jew.") What does Roth want us to think about a man who could make that despicable allusion to Ronald Reagan's present infirmity? So far as I could tell, he wants us to admire him. A fiction writer is entitled to presumption of innocence with respect to his characters' opinions, but in the absence of irony or rebuttal the horrid thought keeps surfacing: Perhaps Roth himself feels this way. *Perhaps it's Roth's voice we're hearing.*

As I said, it's not a bad novel, as novels go nowadays. There is a discernible story and some excellent secondary characters (always a strong point of Roth's); though I think Ira himself is a failure, with no more blood in him than one of those thirty-foot statues of the heroic worker, hammer brandished aloft, that used to blight the public squares in Tirana and Blagoveshchensk. The book's problem is one of attitude: the assumption that we all share the sentiments of the old Left. Not a fondness for Communism—even the American Left has given up on that—but a gnawing, unsleeping, undiminishing, everlasting hatred of anti-Communism. There is carelessness in the writing, too: Switzerland's currency is the franc, not the Mark, and I do not believe the word "racism" was current in the 1940s. What ever happened to *editing*? □

America Made E-Z

ROBERT H. FERRELL

The Story of American Freedom, by Eric Foner (Norton, 480 pp., $29.95)

A CENTURY and more after the historian Frederick Jackson Turner announced his monocausal interpretation of American history—that life in the New World was marked by a long series of frontier experiences, each renewing democracy—Eric Foner proposes another: the essential thread, he writes, is freedom.

The story as Foner sees it begins with the American Revolution, when adult white males fought for the Jeffersonian idea of freedom against British rule. In subsequent years the greatest contradiction to freedom was of course the imprisonment of most black Americans in slavery. The Civil War momentarily ended their servitude, but it was the lot of blacks who remained in the South to remain fettered for a century more. Meanwhile, the nation's women were, if not enslaved, then subjected to large restrictions, social and legal, until liberated by the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. And then there were the masses of laborers who with industrialization before and notably after the Civil War found themselves working for pittances and trapped in their jobs because of the scarcity of employment elsewhere; they were the "wage slaves" of their times. Not to mention the Indians, the Mexicans in the Southwest, and the "natives" of the places brought into the American empire during and after the Spanish–American War.

But freedom, according to this new synthesis, was irrepressible, could not be put down. The greatest triumph came with the New Deal, with its emphasis on federal assistance and a bureaucracy to assure it, and the Cold War, wherein the challenge posed by the Soviet Union, a country possessed

Mr. Ferrell, a professor emeritus of history at Indiana University, is the author of The Dying President: Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1944–1945, *and* The Presidency of Calvin Coolidge.

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of the weapons of mass destruction, forced Americans to ensure their own freedom, notably through the civil-rights movement of the 1960s.

What to say about this Turnerian construction? Eric Foner has published books on aspects of American freedom, notably his Bancroft Prize work on Reconstruction after the Civil War. He has discussed his new book in seminars at Columbia University, his home institution, and his notes are forbiddingly voluminous—a thorough exploration of the literature both of freedom and of its counter-idea, repression.

The easiest reply of a skeptical reader would be that no single theme can cover the extraordinary complexity of the American story. Turner's frontier thesis was good for American history only up to 1890, when the decennial census showed the disappearance of the frontier. A historian of a generation ago, William Appleman Williams, sought to extend Turner's frontier idea by asserting that with the war of 1898 and the wars of the twentieth century Americans' frontier turned outward. However, Williams's grand design—principally economic, claiming that the new frontier was imperialistic—has failed of acceptance; it flourished during the Vietnam War and died thereafter. A few other monocausal interpretations have appeared, and disappeared. The late Yale historian George W. Pierson divined the American character as partaking of "mobility," with Americans making incessant moves as compared to Europeans. The problem was that mobility could confer no special trait upon anyone who called for the moving van.

Foner admits that freedom is synonymous, or nearly so, with liberty, and that from the Revolution onward one man's (or woman's) freedom could be another's servility. This may be the basic problem, for which each Columbia seminar student had a different suggestion. The quotations throughout the book often are individually convincing, but their thoughtfulness crumples in one's hand, since they come from such different eras or, as mentioned, simply juggle words. One of Foner's resources was the books of Walter Lippmann, who was a wondrous weather vane, always turning to a new interpretation. As Foner relates, Lippmann was in an anti-freedom phase in the 1920s. Whatever the columnist read about he sought in some way to revise; it was always difficult to pin him down.

Perplexed by a new monocausal interpretation I applied to a wise old friend, an historian, who spent some months in Berlin in 1929 and ever after has mulled over the question of what allowed Germany to turn to Hitler four years later, and why Great Britain and the United States, similarly afflicted by the Great Depression, did not. The answer, he says, must lie in some special qualities of national character, he cannot say what, that derive from historical experience. For him, he says, the idea of freedom begs the question.

Foner's book is layered in complexity. It approaches brilliance in relating the efforts of many Americans to advance freedom for everyone, of others to advance it for themselves. But his analysis somehow falls short of explaining the present-day stature of our country as the world's best-functioning economy and democracy and its only surviving superpower. □

CITY DESK

Lost . . . and Found

RICHARD BROOKHISER

EVEN as the city is the capital of American book publishing, it is a center of used-book selling. Books begin their lives here new and hopeful; then, their hour past, they enter the afterlife of second-hand: not the eternity of Heaven but an interlude, like Valhalla, between death and extinction.

The largest of the city's used-book stores is the Strand—"8 MILES OF BOOKS"—on lower Broadway. That stretch of Broadway, plus nearby Fourth Avenue, was once lined with used-book stores; in 1924 Whittaker Chambers found Lenin's *The Soviets at Work* in the neighborhood, and began his long journey. Now the Strand is almost the only one left. Strand T-shirts sell at the check-out counter, and the clerks use computers, but the rest of the store looks unchanged from the days of the Soviets. Fluorescent tubes supply the light; fans with black blades move the air and the mold spores. The books rest on oversized shelves ten feet high, like dream furniture. The decorator must have liked brown linoleum, or maybe it was white once.

The selections range from dingy paperbacks, offered at five for two dollars—sediment from high-school reading lists and corporate giveaways—to pretentious multi-volume sets (lots of Carl Sandburg on Abraham Lincoln). Reviewers' copies, unloaded after a bored and hostile flip-through, are displayed up front. New York authors learn early: do not visit the Strand around pub date.

An eccentric friend of mine deals with the anxiety arising from this profusion with a system of randomized shopping: he rolls dice to pick an aisle, a shelf, and a volume (located by its distance from the shelf's end). By this means he once bought an Indian Five-Year Plan from 1959. "You read that?" I demanded.

The Strand is an eddy where old books collect, like twigs, water striders, and last year's leaves.

"It went fast," he explained; "there were lots of charts."

The stock is not a mere reflection of all that has been published, however. If that were so, romances, detective stories, and evangelical literature would predominate. But those books sell to special audiences, which want one story told, repeatedly. Since they always get the same tale, whether of passion, crime, or salvation, they might as well buy something new and clean; and without a market for resales, such works do not wash up at the Strand. The Strand aims at that elusive being, the browsing general reader.

Washington Irving wisely compared the death of books to the yearly death of vegetation: if it weren't for frost, nothing new could ever grow. Still, it's hard on the vegetation. A writer toils for

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vanity, money, or maybe even because he has something to say. He jumps through the hoops of submissions to agents and submissions to editors; of galleys and page proofs. Perhaps he throws himself a party. The process makes him feel as if he is rising, to air and flight. But his book emerges in a heavier element, like water. Most founder immediately; a few sail along for a ways. The Strand is an eddy where they collect, like twigs, water striders, and last year's leaves. Egomaniacs dream of Homer, pleasing and shocking after three millennia (think what he could have made on foreign rights). Cyril Connolly proposed the more realistic goal of writing a book that would be read after ten years. Most of the books in the Strand are more than ten years old. Worse, so are their jackets: "A startling up-to-the-minute look"—at Dwight Eisenhower, by John Gunther, in 1952.

Appropriately enough, the best books I ever found in the home of lost books were about a lost world—the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. These volumes appeared in 1910–11 and were dedicated, "by permission," to His Majesty George V and to William Howard Taft. It was a high moment of Anglo-American civilization, with the emphasis still on the "Anglo." Most of the contributors, briefly described at the head of each volume, have biographies like this: "Chaplain, Oxford Diocesan Mission to the Deaf and Dumb"; "Principal Music Critic for *Daily Telegraph*"; "In charge of the collections of Reptiles and Fishes, Department of Zoology, British Museum." Occasionally there is a foreigner—"Chamberlain of H.M. the Emperor of Austria." But the *Titanic* has not sailed, and H.M.'s son has not gone to Sarajevo.

After a century of intermittent peace and seeming progress, the editors of the *Britannica* wanted to know everything, and put it in these green-backed volumes. If what you want to know didn't happen after the birth of Ronald Reagan, it is here, more thoroughly described than in any modern reference work (65 pages on "China," for instance). Of course there are prejudices. "Like all the other inhabitants of the Caucasus, the Circassians were distinguished for two very opposite qualities—the most generous hospitality and implacable vindictiveness." "General Tiresias Simon Sam followed and ruled [Haiti] till his flight to Paris in 1902. The usual civil war ensued . . ." Every age knows everything, but many ages derive their knowledge from extrapolating revelations. The spirit of confident and fair-minded inquiry on which the age of the 11th edition relied looks, in retrospect, both admirable and limited. "Though anti-Semitism has been unmasked and discredited, it is to be feared that its history is not yet at an end."

All books die, and most deserve to. But some, while they are going, throw a light forward as well as back. □

ART

Adventures of the Optic Nerve

JAMES GARDNER

THE paintings of Pierre Bonnard, now on view at the Museum of Modern Art, represent the moment when, early in the present century, the radicalism of French painting was fully assimilated and neutralized by the culture of the middle classes. If Gauguin and Matisse are the revolutionary firebrands of French modernism, Bonnard is its bureaucratic aftermath, the sacred keeper of other people's flame. There is hardly an element of his copious production that cannot be traced to other artists. His landscapes recall Gauguin and Cezanne, his nudes look back to Degas, and his interiors and still-lifes glance sideways to Matisse. At all times, he not only takes from these artists, but imitates them with a humility that recalls the studio practice of the Renaissance rather than that of modern art. And yet, out of this unlikely self-effacement, Bonnard conjured one of the most authentic, if not one of the most original, artistic statements of his day.

Corner of a Table, c. 1935

His distinctive charm is born of the honesty with which he remains true to his own idiosyncratic perceptions. In this he reflects a strain of French thought around 1900, best exemplified by Bergson and Proust, that is intensely introspective and that aspires, at the same time, to inquire almost scientifically into the perceptual nature of inner experience. Despite his brilliant colors, Bonnard is rarely dramatic and never demonstrative. He is, on the contrary, a shy and reclusive painter who, as he once famously said, was given to "*la transcription des aventures du nerf optique*," the transcription of the adventures of the optic nerve. His ambition was "to show what one sees when one enters a room all of a sudden," to record the "importance of unexpected impression," until "everything lights up and the painting is in full vibration!"

In this insistence on perceptual integrity, he was subtly different from most of the painters of his generation. He did not have much use for the involved aesthetic arguments of Maurice Denis and Paul Serusier, his Nabis contemporaries, any more than for their effete literary subtexts. At the same time, he is less of a realist than the earlier generation of impressionists. He is not, like Manet, a "painter of modern life," interested in registering contemporary reality and commenting directly on class structure or the intrusion of the Industrial Revolution upon domestic life. Rather he is content to accept the world as given—hence his falling into disrepute among some critics—and, above all, to record that point of contact between interior and exterior space.

A good example is his early work *The Meal*, from 1899, in which a woman and a young child sit at a large table covered with a sparkling white tablecloth that takes over the canvas. Arrayed

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across the cloth are a bowl of fruit and some coffee cups and glasses. There is something childlike and fabulistic about the scene's rough rendering, and yet, as is typical of Bonnard, the reality of the objects tightens into focus, giving the lie to the dreamy indecisiveness with which the objects themselves are depicted.

Perhaps the most important artistic fact about Bonnard is that he is a pictorial pluralist. Despite the impressionistic vigor and realness of his art, his quest for reality, especially early on, was negotiable. In *Faun, or The Rape of the Nymph*, he has created a purely mythological work that echoes the moody music of Debussy. An early example like *The Croquet Game*, a predominantly green work, is inspired in part by the verdures of medieval tapestries, until its fabulistic irreality transfigures a thoroughly domestic and down-to-earth scene into something of almost courtly stiffness.

If one thing comes across at the Modern's retrospective, it is that Bonnard painted too much. This is not to say that he often, or ever, painted badly. Rather it is to insist that most of his work is of a high level of mediocrity. Seen together it looks impressive and engaging, but it lacks that final and overwhelming sense of excellence that would be immediately evident if one were to reduce these hundred-odd images to two dozen, starting with the *Boulevard des Batignolles*, the *White Interior*, and *Corner of a Table* from 1935. Only then would Bonnard's true pictorial intelligence have succeeded in freeing itself from the context of easy charm beneath which it is all too often concealed. □

Pierre Bonnard conjured one of the most authentic artistic statements of his day.

FILM

There Are Prisons, and Prisons

JOHN SIMON

UNDER the curious label Propaganda Films comes ***Return to Paradise***, which sounds like something with sarongs and sex in straw huts, but is a much better movie than it sounds. Actually, it does rather begin that way. Three young Americans are enjoying the interval between college and real life with blissful *far niente* in Malaysia, where they go native, smoke hash, and make love to luscious village maidens. They do resist some of the suspect drugs being peddled by particularly obnoxious pushers, but otherwise indulge in all the pleasures of the beaches and mountains near Penang.

Two of them, Sheriff and Tony, decide to go home, but Lewis chooses to stay on and help with relocating orangutans in the wild. Sheriff dumps his spare hash in the trash can before taking off with Tony. We next see these two in New York, where Tony has an office job and the laid-back Sheriff is a limo driver. Two years have passed, and suddenly there pops up in Sheriff's limousine a beautiful young lawyer, Beth, who informs him that because of his excess hash, Lewis was arrested as a putative drug dealer, has been in jail all this time, and will hang in eight days unless Tony and Sheriff go back to be tried with him. If both return, it will be three years of jail for each of the three; if only one, six years for him and for Lewis. Beth is Lewis's lawyer and will try anything to get the two friends back to unparadisiac Penang.

Now, I know nothing about international law, but I question much of this. Why did no one get in touch with Sheriff and Tony sooner? Where are Washington and our embassy in all this? And how does one know these exact Penang penalties before the trial, which comes after two years' detention, with execution, apparently, immediately after the verdict? And who are Lewis's family and this enchanting lawyer out of left field, so late in the game? The film

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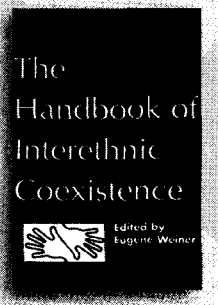

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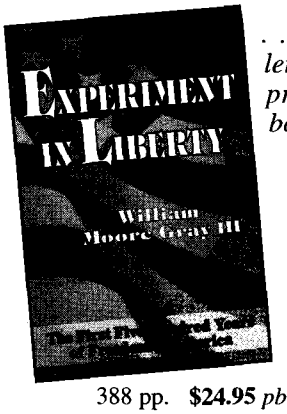

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offers feeble explanations for all of this, and I don't buy any of them.

What I do buy, however, is the dialogue, the breathless excitement, and the acting. Beth works persuasively on Tony's conscience: Tony will even go it alone, though his smart girlfriend has researched Malaysian prisons to highly disturbing effect. Indeed, we see Lewis in a wretched cell, pitifully curled up under a thin blanket, dehumanized and uncontrollably shaking. But Sheriff is unwilling to go back, though quite willing to let Beth try to change his mind as the days go ominously by.

I suppose you have guessed that there will be a romance between Sheriff and Beth, and a torrid one it is, melting his resistance. Matters are complicated by a black female journalist who has got wind of Lewis's plight and wants to publish the story. Beth warns her that this will infuriate the Malaysians and make things worse for everyone. The women strike an unlikely bargain, and here, too, much remains unclear and unconvincing.

But, again, the film, as written by Wesley Strick and Bruce Robinson, directed by Joseph Ruben, and shot by Reynaldo Villalobos, sweeps you along past logical objections, however justified. There are characters you can feel with and root for, and their likableness and predicament are steadily compelling. It is only when some other key ingredient is deficient that reason can undermine fiction. As things are here, even the periwigs in the trial scene, which clearly bespeak Singapore rather than Penang, make little difference.

Vince Vaughn as Sheriff is an appealing young leading man, and a little facial chubbiness makes him even more sympathetic. His acting style is wonderfully easygoing, which makes him yet more impressive when he rises to moments of high drama. Joaquin Phoenix makes a virtue of his ordinariness—backed up, to be sure, by solid acting—and turns Lewis into an utterly believable unheroic Everyman. The lesser parts are decently handled, and then there is Anne Heche, sensational as Beth.

Anne Heche gives one of the finest female performances in recent cinematic history.

I have not had strong feelings about the actress one way or the other, and her spectacular emergence from the closet did not change anything. Yet here she is giving one of the finest female performances in recent cinematic history, both as a passionate advocate and as a passionate lover. There is great natural dignity matched by supreme intelligence, not easy to convey but here perfectly embodied, along with a slightly vulpine intensity that teases at low and irradiates at high. Her scenes with Vince Vaughn are an amazing progression from cat and mouse to man and woman enchantingly interacting.

■ ***Regeneration***, which disappeared at record speed from our screens, is a beautiful and potent film you are, alas, unlikely to see. A Scottish–Canadian coproduction, it deals with the poet Siegfried Sassoon, who, after winning the Military Cross for bravery as a lieutenant in World War I, concluded in 1916 that this war was immoral, and bravely spoke out against it. He hoped to publicize his cause by a court martial, but his fellow poet and officer Robert Graves convinced him that would be counterproductive. So he let himself be declared mad and sent to Craiglockhart Castle in Scotland, a military hospital for the shell-shocked.

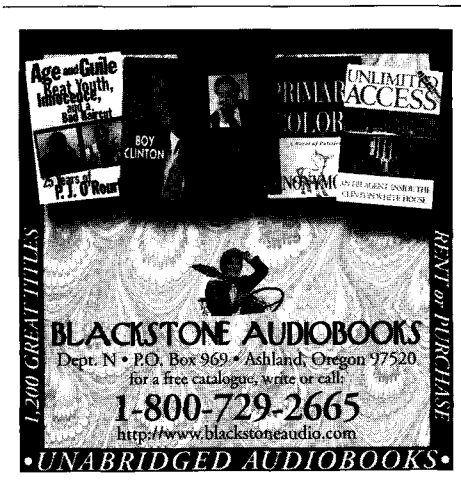
Here Sassoon comes under the care of Dr. William Rivers, one of Britain's first Freudians, whose job it was to return his patients to the war, an ambiguous cure that caused him considerable anxiety. Now he was confronted with an even stranger situation: having to treat someone entirely sane. What makes it all the more absorbing is that Sassoon was neither a pacifist nor a coward, and that the film is far from a simple anti-war screed. The therapy sessions become a contest between two highly intelligent men in a paradox-laden agon.

Rivers is also treating a young working-class officer, Bill Prior (a fictional figure), whom shell shock has propelled into mutism. And also the poet Wilfred Owen, whom Sassoon befriends at Craiglockhart and guides into writing his great poems about the war, which Owen has previously avoided as a topic. The interplay of these three men and Rivers is as intellectually stimulating as it is emotionally involving.

There are further subplots. Rivers, on leave in London, studies the methods of Dr. Yealland, who treats shell shock with electroshock, with much faster results but frightening means. And there is a discreet but affecting love affair between Billy and a local girl that elicits therapeutic benefits. And there are those scenes with the medical boards where drama and irony wryly intertwine. The film is based on a historical novel by Pat Barker, a woman who deals with this seemingly masculine subject superlatively.

Gillies Mackinnon has directed with sensitivity and elegance, mostly in a stunning reconstruction of the thirteenth-century Craiglockhart Castle. There are lovely scenes on its grounds, emphasizing the patients' plight by contrast, and there are burnished-looking indoor scenes moodily shot by Glen Macpherson. Allan Scott's fine screenplay gives us terrific trench-warfare footage (not in the novel) and the scenes of as-yet primitive shock therapy—with John Neville a smilingly demonic Dr. Yealland—terrifying without any exploitativeness. There is also a great deal of subtle wit, and only a couple of sequences fail to ring true.

The acting is tremendous: understated, but without any of that old-style stiff-upper-lip hokum. As Rivers, Jonathan Pryce confirms his status as one of Britain's supreme character actors, turning in a performance of such complexity and penetrance as would require a separate column to assess. But the rest are not far behind: James Wilby's quietly forceful Sassoon, Jonny Lee Miller's smoldering Billy, Stuart Bunce's touching Owen, along with John Neville, David Hayman, and a host of others. That *Regeneration* is critically slighted and publicly ignored, while *Saving Private Ryan* reaps journalistic hosannas and box-office bonanzas, is as good a comment on our times as I can think of. □



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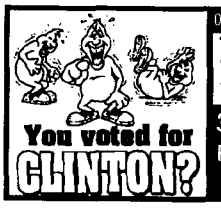

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What Are The Alternatives?

NEW YORK, AUGUST 21

The Republic, we are advised, is at loggerheads on the question of Mr. Clinton. We learn that the overwhelming majority of the editorial/critical community are dissatisfied with the proposition that we simply go on from here and give our attention entirely to the bombing of unfriendly parts of the world. In contrast—again, so we are told—the majority of the American people are "sick" of the whole question and want to move on to something else.

A personal exposure to the questions before the house suggests that what is missing from the picture is: expiation. An exchange with former governor Mario Cuomo advises us that, in his opinion, the speech given by Clinton on August 17 was itself a sufficient sacrifice, a deposit on the scales of justice and atonement for his sins. Asked whether he admitted that Mr. Clinton's recitation was the result not of an activated conscience but of running into a dead end on the road of evasion, Cuomo answered, persuasively, that this is so in almost every situation. People don't confess (except to priests) until they are caught.

But of course, when a malefactor is caught, he is in most cases punished. The traduced wife may simply forgive and forget, but in most situations there are things like prison terms and the like. How does penance fit in the present picture?

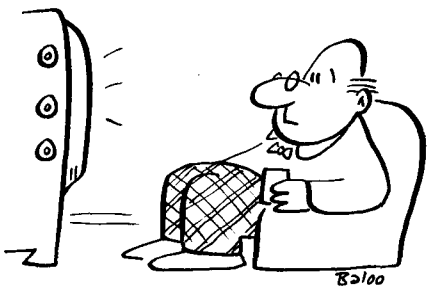
The frustration of the critical community is in two parts. The first (for some of them), that Mr. Clinton beguiled them, by lying and inducing their collusion in his lies. The second, the special difficulties in punishing a President of the United States. Governor Cuomo insists, and again does so plausibly, that one should not impeach, as putatively guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, a Chief Executive who does nothing more than "engage in consensual sex." This is a tender recitation of what the President did, the brief of an advocate rather than an arbiter. But the advocates of leaving things as they are have the advantage of being able to ask, What is the alternative?

What indeed? You can't put a President under house arrest. Or suspend him from office for six months. Or give him a thousand hours of community service.

Not only can't you do that, there is simply no way of dispensing with presidential pomp and festoonery. This means acres of people meeting him lustily at airports, stopping to hear out the strains of "Hail to the Chief," applauding his speeches and raising money for his political causes. In entirely different situations the sanction of Coventry is handy. There are things you can do to the likes of a Mrs. Helmsley, upon learning that she is cruel and abusive to her subordinates: unless you work for her and have perforce to greet her in the morning, you can resolve to avoid her socially. The man in Newport who, by the most persuasive accounts, tried to murder his wife, who lies still in a coma, one could at least attempt to avoid. Schoolboys intuitively sensed out the usefulness of ostracism at the beginning of time.

Then too, you sense that sympathy for the victim caught up is a lively impulse. Ivan the Terrible was cheered and implored not to leave office. Richard Nixon, before too long, was given standing ovations. In the case of a sitting President, it is simply impractical simultaneously to ostracize him and acknowledge his power to engage the military, staff the Supreme Court, and direct the activity of some two million federal employees. It is not easy to imagine a President delivering a State of the Union speech to a Congress whose members turn their backs on him when he begins speaking.

The psychological impasse changes, of course, if the Starr report demonstrates wrongdoing more formal than what Clinton has acknowledged. There are those (of us) who believe that what he did to Monica Lewinsky—the way he did it and the duplicity of his subsequent behavior—is actually more offensive than lying to a grand jury about a gift, or nudging a friend to keep silent. But the law is the governing formality, and we are therefore face to face with real alternatives. It appears that there is nothing unmistakably impeachable in hand. That being so, how do those citizens who accept responsibility for preserving the tablets of public morality behave? What can they hope to get from President Clinton, this side of a resignation, that serves as an appropriate oblation to trust scorned? □



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Black/White—What's What?

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 1

Acknowledge that there is a temptation to relate almost all political news to Clinton/Lewinsky. Having done so, acknowledge too that there are reasons for this. The missile strike—any connection? The summit conference in Moscow—any connection? The hand-holding coming out of church on Sunday—piety on order? The reticulative apparatus brings up the net, and everything seems to point to Clinton/Lewinsky. The most recent contribution to this monomania revives gloomy thinking prompted after the O. J. Simpson verdict came in.

What the *New York Times*/CBS poll tells us is that black Americans and white Americans are looking out at the world through entirely different lenses. The poll tells us a lot more than the usual business about the relative commercial and educational advantages of whites.

Question: "[Do you] trust Bill Clinton to keep his word as President?" On this, white Americans are exactly split: 46 per cent yes, 45 per cent no. Black Americans? 86 yes, 7 no.

Now there is zero in different educational experiences between whites and blacks that can account for this polarity. If 86 per cent of the American black population opine that Clinton's word is trustworthy, we have either a massive case of blurred vision, or else an acceptance of reality. If 2 per cent of Americans believe that the world is flat, we would dismiss them either as eccentric or as invincibly ignorant.

The poll is suggesting, in effect, that black Americans' capacity to assimilate data is in disrepair. But we know that is not true. We know that whatever the differences in academic achievement scores,

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they cannot possibly account for this disparity. It is cultural, not cognitive. And that is alarming enough.

On a question more general, more evaluative than "Is Clinton to be trusted?" we get: "[Do you] have a favorable opinion of Bill Clinton?" Answer: Whites—again almost exactly split—42 per cent favorable, 47 per cent unfavorable. Blacks? 82 favorable, 4 unfavorable. And then the haymaker: "[Do you believe that] Bill Clinton shares the moral values most Americans try to live by?" Whites: Yes, 29 per cent; no, 66 per cent. Blacks? Yes, 71 per cent; no, 25 per cent.

When O. J. Simpson was found not guilty, the question of a cultural disparity in perception was raised. When 75 per cent of black Americans believe that the answer is A, not B, and 75 per cent of white Americans believe that the answer is B, not A, then what we have is a breakdown in communication between two cultures. Either we share a common language and a common rational apparatus or we do not. "It is a very scary thing," I noted in this space at the time, "when three-quarters of one ethnic group flatly disagree with three-quarters of another ethnic group about the structure of rational arguments. It is simply wrong to suppose that the white majority believed O.J. to be guilty because he was black. It is simply undeniable that the black majority believed him innocent because he was black."

What is to be done about a phenomenon so culturally divisive? Analysts seized by the requirements of Political Correctness will no doubt be tempted to explain it by saying that American blacks are telling us, in effect, that the Emperor has no clothes. I.e., that they are seeing the ultimate reality, undistracted by details of negligible importance. But if that is the case, then the great majority of the white community are apparently incapable of reasoned intellectual or moral thought. Years ago an essayist commented on the bizarre reaction of a Nigerian audience to a French movie based on the slave trade. Scene: A mutiny is attempted by blacks bound for slavery in America. The white captain and crew overcome the mutineers, who are made to walk the plank into shark-infested waters.

The reaction of the audience? Cheers. Because—this analyst sought to explain—the reigning tradition in that part of the world emphasized loyalty to the chief. And the chief, in this situation, was the captain of the ship. That he was white, and that his victims were attempting to save themselves from slavery, was not decisive in governing the emotions of the viewers. What was decisive was the authority of the chief, whose success was accordingly applauded.

Can such an explanation account for the *New York Times*/CBS figures? Clinton is the chief and must be applauded? Or, to qualify, must the chief, in today's circumstances, be a Democrat? □

Hollywood On Health Care

NEW YORK, AUGUST 14

The movie *As Good As It Gets* has a sequence as follows. The lonely, impoverished woman has an asthmatic kid. A ray of sun is working its way into the crabbed heart of the rich Bad Guy. And lo! A doctor—a real live doctor—appears at the mother's apartment one afternoon and says that he wants to examine the boy. Has he had an X test? a Y test?—never mind; the doctor will see to it that the boy gets those tests. The doctor proceeds to probe a little, and ends the conversation with the tired mother by saying: "I can tell you this. Your kid will sleep a lot better from now on."

Lesson? You need to be rich enough to hire a private doctor before you can have any hope of getting the right kind of treatment for an asthmatic child.

Now one begins an analysis of the current health scene by acknowledging facts that cannot be made to go away, and should not. They are that rich people can afford extraordinary care. They can afford to do a lot of oddball and sometimes effective things, like going to Germany to take the baths, or sneaking in past the FDA an alleged miracle drug from Tibet. But in this movie, Hollywood is giving an impression in categorical terms, namely that unless you are wealthy, you can't get the indicated help for an asthmatic young patient. It isn't as if the mother had said, Junior needs a heart transplant of a kind that can only be performed by Doctor Bousialandris in Belarus—in such a situation only a very deep pocket helps. No, the movie suggested we were looking at a conventional asthmatic condition.

It is the season to rail against the HMOs. Again, begin where it makes sense to begin: Some HMOs are demonstrably run without any regard for the purpose they were established to serve. But again, analysis requires that one ask, Why do people organize HMOs? Not necessarily because they are altruistically concerned with health care. They are, from the president to the hospital janitor, engaged in making a living and, if possible, a profit. If an HMO fails to make a profit, investors pull out.

Well, is there a way to cope with the dictates of market forces in a health system? Yes, you can nationalize medicine. What then happens is that there are no shareholders to distribute profits to; but with the disappearance of the shareholders, other claimants move in. Mostly, these are 1) suppliers; and 2) quality-entrepreneurs. In Great Britain if you want a hip operation you get it free. But you will have to wait two years before your name comes up. As regards high-quality medicine, rich people in England (or in most of Europe) travel to Houston or Boston or Cleveland for intricate heart work.

The search in America is for the squared circle. We turned down nationalized medicine because we knew its consequences. But we wanted free "health care." Health care is defined as: Someone else (theoretically) pays for it. All you need to do is report to the doctor, or the hospital, and care is taken of you.

In the U.S., more than 13 per cent of our gross domestic product goes to health care. In Great Britain it is closer to 7 per cent. This means two things: 1) We have more health care; and 2) We have more money spent on health, irrespective of whether better health is achieved. If you pay $85 for a blood test that you could get for $20 by shopping around, you are not getting better health, though you are spending more money on health.

Enter the HMOs, whose design is to keep costs lower than they were projected to be back when every year health expenses rose by about 11 per cent. Granted—once again, an elementary analytical point—that this doctor or that nurse is more attentive than that one, or the other. What does not alter is that an attempt to lower the cost of individual subscriptions to HMOs has got to result in economies of some kind. This may mean the kid has to wait in line to see the doctor. It should not mean that he needs to find a J. P. Morgan in order to get treatment for asthma.

As almost always, the market comes up, not with solutions (what is the "solution" for having been born asthmatic?), but with approaches. The fundamental goal is restraint by the consumer. The Forbes Corporation approached this years ago. If you spend less than $1,200 per year on health, you get a bonus of the difference between what you did spend, and $1,200. Forbes employees (on the whole) spend less; and earn more. Nobody has noticed any difference in their level of health. □

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THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

OKAY, you win. I aim to please. I had another subject planned but I got a bundle of letters asking about the Gay Nineties songs in my Y2K column so it's back to the gilded cage.

First, the requests. I can't accept collect calls to sing over the phone so you can learn the tunes: my singing would not necessarily convey them. Appearing in concert on the next *NR* cruise is out, and I modestly decline to record a cassette with WFB accompanying me on the harpsichord. Not that I never sing; the third martini will do it but it has to be spontaneous.

How did I learn such old songs? From my grandmother; we used to sing while I held her knitting wool. There was also a radio show around 1940 called *The Gay Nineties Hour* with an Irish tenor named Frank Munn who sang all three verses to songs that are known today, if at all, only by their choruses.

"In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree" has a happy chorus but a sad verse: "Father, if you'll tell me where she's lying, if the grave be far just point it out to me. Dear boy, she said to us when she was dying, to bury her beneath the apple tree." By the same token, "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now?" has a sentimental chorus and a cynical verse: "You have kissed 'neath the moon while the world was in tune, then you left her to hunt a new game. Did it ever occur to you later, my boy, that she's probably doing the same?"

Granny's favorites were about fallen women, and some of them were harrowing. "I stopped then to see what the object could be, and there in the gutter did lay, a woman in tears from the crowd's angry jeers, and then I heard somebody say . . ." The reminder that "She may have seen better days" changes the jeers to tears in the second verse and leads to streetcorner group therapy in the third.

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The understanding male is a fixture in fallen-women songs, a fact overlooked by feminists obsessed with the Victorian patriarchy's madonna–whore distinction. The most touching was composed by Paul Dresser, *né* Dreiser, who, like his brother Theodore, was haunted by memories of their erring sister.

In the first verse a carefree young man in the big city is leaving work at the end of the day when suddenly—and with perfect grammar—"I saw a girl who shrank from me in whom I recognized my schoolmate in a village far away." She tries to avoid him but he persists. "Don't turn away, Madge, I am still your friend! Next week I'm going back to see the old folks and I thought, perhaps a message you would like to send."

Her answer is a chorus of regret. "Just tell them that you saw me, she said, they'll know the rest. Just tell them I was looking well, you know. Just whisper, if you get a chance, to Mother Dear and say I love her as I did long, long ago."

Refusing to let her go, he takes her home with him in the second verse, and in the third reunites her with her dying mother. Theodore handled the material differently in *Sister Carrie* but it was the same story.

Most of these tunesmiths were uneducated men who had knocked around vaudeville but their lyrics were models of English. Take the little boy whose sister is dying of consumption. Overhearing the doctor's verdict that she will be dead when the leaves fall, he finds a ball of string and climbs a tree, telling the curious: "I'm tying them on 'ere summer be gone so my dear little Nelly won't die." When did you last hear a subjunctive verb in a popular song?

The loving and protective brother was another fixture. Girls always seemed to have them, and were they ever handy. "I've come to this great city to find a brother dear, and you wouldn't dare insult me, sir, if Jack were only here!" In the second verse of "My Mother Was a Lady," the harasser discovers that he knows Jack and offers to take her to him. "He'll be so glad to see you, and if you'll only wed, I'll take you to him as my wife, for I've loved you since you said . . ."

Or try this one. In the first verse a little girl asks her bachelor uncle why he never married. He replies in the second verse with the story of the long-ago night when he took his beloved to a ball. During the evening she becomes thirsty and so he leaves her in an anteroom and goes to get her a glass of water, but when he returns he finds her in another man's arms. "Down fell the water, broken was all, just as my heart broke after the ball."

The third verse tells of her attempts to explain and his refusal to listen. They break up, she dies, and he nurses a grudge until: "One day a letter came from that man, he was her brother, so the letter ran. That's why I'm lonely, no home at all, I believed her faithless after the ball."

HOW did the songs influence me? In various ways, good and bad. They helped me break into the true-confessions magazines. The confessions formula of sin, suffer, repent and the Gay Nineties formula of first verse, second verse, third verse are essentially the same. I was fine as long as I stuck to pulp fiction, but my attempts at serious novels foundered on the long arm of coincidence, the nick of time, and the deathbed clarification.

They gave me a sentimental streak to balance my otherwise bleak temperament, but it can produce some bizarre reactions, as when I ghosted a book for a famous lady of the evening.

Professionally, it went well—she was nothing if not forthcoming—but meeting her triggered an uncharacteristic depression I could not shake off. I was in full mope when my agent called.

"So how'd it go?"

"She doesn't have a heart of gold."

"So what else is new?"

He thought I was kidding but I felt so sad that I got drunk and sang what I now think of as the Ballad of Monica Lewinsky: "She's more to be pitied than censured, she's more to be helped than despised. She's only a lassie who ventured on life's stormy path ill-advised. Do not scorn her with words fierce and bitter, do not laugh at her shame and downfall, for a moment just stop and consider that a man was the cause of it all." □

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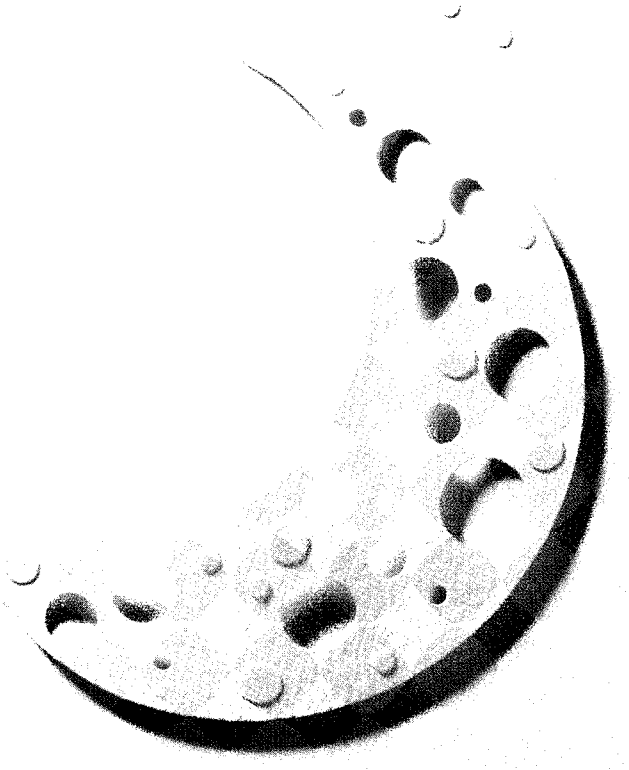

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